The Disciplines of Liberty

The Faith & Conduct of the Christian Freeman

By Willard L. Sperry

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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THE FAITH AND CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN

BY

WILLARD L. SPERRY, 1882-

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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER
WILLARD GARDNER SPERRY
HENRIETTA LEAROYD SPERRY

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Preface.

THE idea of Liberty, in one form or another, dominates the religious life of the present day. No matter how troubled the waters, the Freeman's spirit points true to this magnetic pole. Given this initial loyalty a man may box the compass of all other religious interests with an approximate fidelity to contemporary fact. These chapters suggest some of the outstanding points of the religious compass at the present time, but the thought of freedom is both their point of departure and their goal. The reader will make due allowance for the deviation due to personal factors and will correct these deviations by his own experience.

I am conscious of the fact that these pages may suggest the cheap and easy device of "scissors and paste." I have yielded, in some measure, to the inevitable seduction of the other man's effective statement of the case half from choice and half from necessity: from deliberate choice, because as a reader of religious literature I find that much of the value of any contemporary book is drawn from the constant intimation of other significant and rewarding books lying to one side or the other of the immediate highway; from necessity, because no man who is thinking and writing to-day can deny the whole premise of his effort—the noble communism of the modern religious mind.

In particular I wish to acknowledge my debt to those who have directly contributed to the making of this book. I fully realize that any freshness and conviction in these pages is very largely due to the two parishes to which I have ministered. The preacher of to-day is made or unmade, spiritually, by his people. They either force him into innocuous conventionality or urge him on to the exercise of his Christian freedom. The lines have fallen to me in more than happy places in these last years, in that I have found myself ministering to men and women who wished the man who preached to them to speak his own mind, irrespective of ortho-

doxies and heresies. Preaching, therefore, has become less and less an exercise of pulpit rhetoric and more and more a certain experimental thinking out loud. What the practice of preaching may have lost as a formal art, under these conditions, it has gained as the personal adventure both of preacher and hearer. If we have indulged in few flights of perfervid oratory in praise of our Christian Liberty, we have sought to think candidly and concretely about various aspects of that Liberty in faith and practice. I must, therefore, acknowledge my indebtedness to a constant sympathetic hearing in my present pastorate in the Central Congregational Church of Boston, and during a previous pastorate in the First Church of Fall River.

I am further indebted to my friend of other days in Oxford, and now my kinsman, Professor Charles A. Bennett of Yale University, for many valuable suggestions as to the matter and style of this particular volume, as for countless hours of comradeship in the common task of turning up the fallow ground of the mind; to Mr. Wilson Follett of New Haven for final appraisal of certain of these chapters; to Miss C. E. Howard, minister's assistant at Central Church, for patient and accurate help in the preparation of the manuscript; to Miss Ruth M. Gordon of the Old South Parsonage, Boston, for aid in reading the proofs; and to Mr. Ellery Sedgwick for leave to reprint as Chapter VIII of this volume a paper which appeared under another caption in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1921.

WILLARD L. SPERRY.

Boston,
February 4, 1921.

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CHAPTER I.

What Is a Christian?

THIS question was never more difficult and never more imperative than it is to-day. The latter years have seen radiant flashes of the Christian spirit, like broken lights from the facets of a great gem, shining from the city slums, battlefields, hospitals and prisons. But there are very few of us who are so bold as to identify the total civilization of which we are a part with that Kingdom of God, seen in prophetic vision, to which Jesus gave himself in life and death. And there are very many of us who doubt our moral right as individuals to that bravest of all forms of self-designation—"Christian"—which was first accepted by the disciples at Antioch.

Nothing is more characteristic of the present religious mood than this new humility as to our world and ourselves, this reluctance to claim for ourselves identity with an idealism which never seemed more absolute, and yet which never seemed more necessary. We are living in a world which has all but exhausted the moral possibilities of the dogmas of enlightened self-interest, free competition, paternalism and kindred nostrums; a world which finds itself driven on by this process of moral elimination to the religion of Jesus. The pilgrim soul of us moves on to Christianity as a last resort, an ultimate recognition of that moral necessity which a more discerning discipleship anticipated from the first, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" is not only the greatest English lyric since the days of the Elizabethans, it is the spiritual epic of contemporary Christendom which has "fled Him down the arches of the years" in vain, only in the end to hear the voice of Christ saying,

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!

* * * * *

Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He whom thou seekest!

This drift of the modern mind, this yearning of the deepest heart of our age, is very far from being one more formal apologetic on the part of professional religionists. Since the days of Job it has been hard for the bystander to believe that any man serves God for nought. And even though a tolerant skepticism may concede again and again the existence of the churchman or theologian who has an unmercenary love of truth and a disinterested zeal for the Christian religion, still it scents the presence of some system to which the professional religionist must adapt himself and which he must defend. The world at large sees even the most liberal and emancipated churchman struggling by the devious and morally dubious means of mental reservation and "spiritual" interpretation to conform to hereditary creeds and liturgies. The nobler and freer such a man is, the more he excites the sympathy of the unchurched idealism of the day, and the more his inner efforts to interpret and substantiate his position seem to that world lacking in the liberty and native integrity which are a part of real religion.

"It is a singular infatuation," writes Thoreau in his "Journal," "that leads men to become clergymen in regular or even in irregular standing. In the clergymen of the most liberal sort I see no perfectly independent human nucleus, but I seem to see some indistinct scheme hovering about, to which he has lent himself, to which he belongs. It is a very fine cobweb in the lower stratum of air, which stronger wings do not discover." This obsession of the system is, patently, the greatest spiritual liability of the professional religionist.

We have had in the past quarter of a century many efforts to save the world by substituting a "New Theology" for the "Old Theology." These efforts have relieved here and there the theological tension for scattered individuals, enabling them to conform conscientiously, where conformity is considered the synonym for religion. But no one can claim for these substitutionary doctrines that they have been effective in saving the world. The net result

of all these revisions and restatements is the slowly maturing conviction that in attempting to bring in the Kingdom by tinkering with the details of creeds and liturgies we have been working at the wrong end of the problem. For, as those who have carried this process to its logical conclusion have told us, what the modern mind faces to-day is not the prospect of a critically emended and rehabilitated creed, but a candid reëxamination of the very word "Credo". Moreover, that classic manual of Christian faith, the fourth gospel, specifies, not that those who have a credible system may be assured of a vital religion, but rather that those who do the will shall know the doctrine. The initial appeal of religion is always to religious consciousness, not to that stage of religious self-consciousness once removed from life, which is reflected in our creeds, dogmas and liturgies. Canon Barnett, pioneering among the poor of the East End of London, once complained that "the sad thing in all crises is the way in which good people use their strength in trying to restore the old." In those words he passed judgment not only on the political and economic temper of our time, but on its religious temper also. For in so far as even the most liberal and modern apologia for Christianity has about it this suggestion of a system to be upheld rather than a life to be communicated, every such apologia is once removed from the zest of living. It is a detached discussion of life rather than a direct communication of life.

But it is not the flood tide of familiar ecclesiastical apologetic which interests serious-minded men and women to-day, no matter whether they be inside or outside the Church. The significant signs on the religious horizon are those clouds no bigger than a man's hand gathering in unecclesiastical quarters. It is still very hard for the church mind to believe that any good can come out of these Galilees and Nazareths. The theologian scents the minor heresy of the novelist, the dramatist, the radical. He misses their major passion for a new world. George Bernard Shaw is the last of the moderns whom we should suspect of being enmeshed in the cobwebs of a dogmatic system or committed to a professional apologia for Christianity, yet this same heretical Irishman says: "I am no more a Christian than Pilate was, or you, gentle reader; and yet, like Pilate, I greatly prefer Jesus to Annas or Caiaphas; and I am ready to admit that after contemplating the world and

human nature for nearly sixty years, I see no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will, if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman." Utterances of this sort—and they are multiplying very fast to-day—are far more significant as signs of the religious times than the cumuli of conventional apologetic always piled up in the heavens by the trade winds of habitual ecclesiasticism.

The most notable fact in our present situation is this general turning of the unchurched mind to the religion of Jesus. There is a hopefulness and desire, even a resolute determination in this mind, almost unparalleled in the twenty centuries of Christian history. The effective exponent of the Christian religion to-day is the free lance. H. G. Wells can number the readers of "Mr. Britling" by the thousands where the preachers must count their listeners by the tens, for the simple reason that Mr. Wells cannot be suspected of any ulterior wish to buttress up existing churches and churchmanship. This desire of the modern mind to see Jesus has its origins in no academic or ecclesiastical interest, but in the sorrows, the frustration, the perplexity of the present hour. All of the self-contemplating idealisms which in one form or another have been the driving force in the business, industry and politics of the Anglo-Saxon world of the past half century have served us very ill. Men turn to the gospel of Galilee with a renewed interest because the gospel of Manchester has proved such a shabby substitute. There is left with us as the net result of our experience of enlightened egoism in the terms of mills and guns the deep conviction, as Shaw puts it, that "though we crucified Christ on a stick, he somehow managed to get hold of the right end of it, and that if we were better men we might try his plan." It is out of such vague but deep and real convictions that the present need for a redefinition of Christianity springs.

Any Christianity which is to win and hold the loyalty of the present age and of the immediate future must have a substantial body of intelligible idea. The religion of the last century has been dominated, in the main, by Romanticism. The Romantic movement came into being a hundred and more years ago as the just and inevitable revolt of the human heart against the arid precision and pedantry of the eighteenth century. It is the perennial mood in which

Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours
They hear like ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

This recognition and release of the great ground swell of human feeling and passion was in its own time a right and natural reaction. In theology it led to the redefinition of the religious life, first as the feeling of dependence upon God and ultimately, in the humanism of the mid-nineteenth century, to the definition of religion as a generous fellow feeling for one's human kind.

But no single thesis of life persists indefinitely in history incorruptible and unchallenged. There is a moment in the history of all Romanticism when it begins to putrefy, and that putrefaction ends in Ages of Decadence and Sentimentality. In due time, after Cowper, Wordsworth and Byron, come Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde. And then the wholesome prophetic spirit of mankind reasserts itself. George Meredith dips his pen into the acid of a fresh sincerity and writes of his Diarist: "She would have us away with sentimentalism. Sentimental people, in her phrase, 'fiddle harmonics on the strings of sensualism.' " Leslie Stephen in the cool detachment of his mature old age rebukes the sentimentalism of our times as "Indulgence in emotion for its own sake." Shaw, half Puritan, half Philistine, takes up the cudgels in behalf of a new intellectual and emotional austerity: "Romance is the great heresy to be rooted out from art and life—the root of modern pessimism and the bane of modern self-respect. . . . When the country becomes thoroughly Romantic it will be unbearable for realists. . . . When it comes to that, the force of some strong-minded Bismarckian man of action, impatient of humbug, will combine with the subtlety and spiritual energy of the man of thought whom shams cannot illude or interest." Of these tempers all the challenging figures in modern life are the signs and effects. Indeed, so remote are Romanticism and its bastard child Sentimentalism from the dominant mood of the present moment that the congenial spokesmen for the generation now coming into its own in history are the rebel realists of life and letters, Nietzsche, Strindberg, Tchekoff, Sassoon and their ilk, all cubists, futurists and makers of free verse who are struggling

to escape from the enervating and fundamentally vicious influence of a decadent Romanticism. They may find themselves forced into strained and grotesque postures, like the figures of the Laocoön. But no man who understands the deadly peril which they sense to honest thinking, deep feeling and strong willing in the coils of a sinister sentimentalism will think ungenerously of their struggle.

If Sentimentality is bad in art it is even worse in religion. All of the initial energy of emotion in the theology of Romanticism has spent itself. We may no longer conjure with human feeling as the single talisman of the spiritual life. The temper of the age in which we live is that of a candid realism, suspicious of all vague descriptions of religion as emotion barren of idea. We renounce all heat of feeling which is not also a light for the mind. There is a daring and splendid phrase from the sermons of John Tauler, the mediaeval Dominican, which commands the respect of the modern conscience, to the effect that all titillation of the religious emotions for the sake of the immediate and passing gratification of the nobler nature "shall be counted to a man for spiritual unchastity." The religion which is to command the respect and response of this age must be free from all taint of religious sentimentalism, it must be spiritually chaste.

Nor will the familiar and persistent efforts to define Christianity as Practicality suffice. Modern psychology has glorified the human will, and in the face of all doctrines of necessity and determinism, has exalted before every man's eyes the major energy which he controls. This modern worship of the will, leaving to one side both thought and feeling, has been reflected in the popular religion of our time as a passion for service. The rapture of the mystic's transcendent "twenty minutes of reality" and the midnight oil of the thinker have been superseded by the cup of cold water. But the modern world is in danger of forgetting that the cup of cold water is a religious effect and not a religious cause. It follows upon some clearly defined conception of our relation to God and man. Of itself it cannot create the conviction which must always sustain and inspire it. Organized altruism has not plucked the heart out of the secret of perpetual moral motion, but rests in the last analysis upon personal conviction.

The absence of this conviction imperils the whole present inter-

pretation of the Christian religion as social service. The sense of vacuity and worthlessness already begins to attend the perfunctory gestures of the servant who has no clear idea whom he serves or why he serves. Ten years ago a Bampton lecturer stood up in St. Mary's pulpit, Oxford, and pointed out with penetrating insight the contradiction at the heart of the present situation.

"Sometimes a very high degree of practical unselfishness is accompanied by an extreme sense of uselessness and failure. Such external activity for good without conscious enthusiasm, almost without interest, is remarkable; and the account which the actors in the tragedy give of it when questioned is no less remarkable. They explain their perseverance in right action and in the service of others as due, partly to the force of habit, and partly to the imperious need for escaping from brooding thoughts; but stubbornly deny that it has any moral value, either objectively or to their own character. They maintain that their acts are isolated and meaningless, not springing from any guiding principle within, and in turn not producing that feeling of comfort and power which follows on really moral action. . . . I am convinced that the thing is common—far more common, perhaps, than we are inclined to suppose."

Here, in substance, is the old dogma of salvation by works and its consequent religious misery. Modern Protestantism is fast getting back to the slough from which it first escaped through its rediscovery of the central energy of all religion, the doctrine of justification by faith. It matters not who sells the indulgences, whether Tetzel or a modern philanthropy, the error of all doctrines of justification by works lies in the failure to discern the truth of Emerson's dictum that "Little souls pay the world with what they do, great souls with what they are." The scarcity of great souls in the Christianity of our time must be laid in part to the brood of little souls, who are fretful unless they are "up and doing."

We may well hesitate to disparage, altogether, the wholesome ideal of service which has dominated the life of contemporary Protestantism. This doctrine has saved any number of young men and women from the vices of introspection and of aimless self-indulgence. It has given an escape outward into a world of action from what has been too often in other ages, "the isolated dungeon of my self-consciousness where I rot away unheeded and alone."

It has meant hope and help to hundreds of thousands of the world's neglected and forgotten. But of itself, and apart from the conceptions of God and man which underlie it, this reduction of the content of religion to the terms of social service offers no prospect of permanent spiritual satisfaction. The religious value of the cup of cold water lies not in itself but in all that it symbolizes. It is the gesture of the believer in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Its permanent worth is measured by the thirst of the human soul which it satisfies. No man, therefore, can take the Christian religion to a fellow human being unless he himself has some initial idea of what that religion is. The small boy in school who ventured the tremendous observation that "it is very difficult to express to other people ideas which one has not oneself" unconsciously put his finger on the central weakness of much of the Christian "service" of our time. For, as Tyrrell says: "When all are sufficiently fed, clothed, housed and tended, the question still remains: What to do with life, a question which they cannot answer to whom philanthropy is the whole of life." And these persons bulk very large in our modern churches. Their definition of Christianity, as Tyrrell pungently concludes, is "Practicality. *Circuibat benefaciendo:* He went about doing good. 'Doing good' seems to be the whole of the matter; more especially that sort of good that involves 'going about.' "

Because Sentimentality and Practicality of themselves, without a central body of idea, cannot save the world in which we live, our time must reconsecrate itself to the plain task of thinking through the Christian religion once again. We have shirked this task because sentimentalism in religion is pleasanter than hard thought and practicality is easier. But we cannot effectively make Christians of other men unless we know what Christianity is, and we cannot create a Christian civilization unless we have some idea of what its outstanding qualities and characteristics will be. Since the days of Darwin we have consented listlessly and amiably to the hope that a Christian order would evolve automatically out of the immediate facts. The net result of that amiable mood was Hell. In so far as the whole evolutionary theory has any religious suggestion left, its pertinence lies in some conscious control of evolution, wherein a clearly defined body of idea plays its major part.

In one of his letters to Kingsley, Thomas Huxley once wrote: "The longer I live, the more obvious it is to me that the most sacred act of a man's life is to say and to feel, 'I believe such and such to be true.' All the greatest rewards and all the heaviest penalties of existence cling about that act." Such, certainly, is the sobered temper of our own age. The heavy penalties exacted of our time in the latter years had their historical origin in a vicious, semi-theological dogma about the state systematically taught to a nation for fifty years. Without the actual creed of Treitschke and the consenting opinion of a great body of heretical believers, the thing which the world came to recognize as Prussianism would have been neither possible nor dangerous. The years from 1914 to 1918 give the lie to the cheap current platitude that it does not matter what a man believes. In history, as in character, what men believe is almost the only thing that does matter. And the unhappy consequences of wrong thinking and careless thinking can be overcome only by hard and right thinking. The humble petition of this time is certainly for a heart of flesh instead of the heart of stone. But its sharper cry is also "More brains, O Lord, more brains." It is permanently true of the Christian that

> Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

The current definitions of Christianity have ranged all the way from an arbitrary and absolute idealism to a nebulous sanction of every native virtue. At the former extreme stands Nietzsche, saying, "There was only one Christian and he died on the cross." At the other extreme stands Donald Hankey pleading for the inarticulate Christianity of the average man. The normal religious mind oscillates between these extremes.

At one moment we feel deeply the loneliness and uniqueness of Jesus who must always say in history, "My time is not yet come." At the next moment we gladly admit the latent native goodness of Christ's unavowed, unrecognized disciples who are not far from the Kingdom of God. The designation which at one time we reserve for Jesus alone, at another time we confer without a single reservation upon countless humble souls who in the fulfillment of their duty go the extra moral mile by which human society is uplifted and the Kingdom of God advanced. If the

world is yet in doubt as to what Christianity is, it never is in doubt as to the characteristic Christian act or the distinctive Christian word. Edith Cavell's words in the moment of her death ring true to the forgiving cry of Jesus from the cross, so that qualitatively we sense the identity, and feel no anachronism in defining them as an utterance of the mind of Christ. There is no historical incongruity in this community of spirit. But to isolate these patently Christian episodes and aspects of the life of our time is a far simpler process than to attempt a working definition of the Christian religion in something like its entirety.

In attempting to answer the question, "What is Christianity?" it may well be that the best we can achieve is the simple sum of those human situations, actions and reactions, where the distinctive Christian hall-mark is plainly visible. Beyond this, possibly, our definitions of Christianity should not and cannot aspire. It is worth while remembering that Jesus was content with this method. The mind of the East always moves in a circle. Its total grasp of truth is the sum of impressions received from different angles of vision. Jesus never defined Christianity in so many words. He moved around his central conception, as in the gathered parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, and only suggested by glimpses of its contour the total majesty of his major idea which he never reduced to any geodetic map of the theologian.

The Western mind has sought to improve on the method of the Eastern mind in religion, by moving logically through an idea from premise to conclusion, until the whole hangs together, not as the traveler's many views of the Alps which divide Switzerland and Italy but as a trip through the Simplon tunnel between the two. It is an open question which method casts more light on the central fact! Certainly the pulpit could do no better service to the Christian religion at the present moment than to identify and to exalt in the common mind the countless scattered examples of the Christian spirit which stand out clear and sharply defined in the literature, the history, the biographical incident of modern life. These parables from letters and life bear so clearly the impress of the character of Christ that no one for a moment would confuse them with those other strands which have been woven into the total fabric of contemporary character. They plainly belong to Galilee, not to Athens or to Rome or to Feudalism. Our

nearest and simplest answers to the question, "What is Christianity?" might always well be cast in the more informal and less logical pattern of Jesus' teaching. Grant at Appomattox Court House giving back to Lee his sword and to the southern cavalrymen their horses for the farms of the South, Lincoln tempering military justice by the everlasting mercy, John Hay returning the Boxer indemnity money to China, Father Damien among the lepers of Molokai, Tolstoi writing "Where Love is there God is also," Francis Thompson singing, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within You," Edith Cavell standing in eternal granite in Trafalgar Square while the captains and the kings depart—"What is Christianity?" All that is Christianity.

But since our Western mind is as it is, it will never be wholly content with this elusive and parabolic method of defining the Christian idea. If Christianity is to capture the imagination of our time it must be able to give some more coherent account of itself. It must have its contemporary *credo*, even though it no longer finds self-expression in the traditional creeds.

What the detailed substance of such a statement of the Christian idea must be no one can foresee clearly. Plainly, however, the form in which this idea is stated must be one which is in more or less close accord with the general intellectual temper of the time. The unfitness of the classical Christian creeds as a vehicle for the statement of the idea stuff of contemporary Christianity lies not in the difficulties which inhere in any controverted clauses, but in the general mental temper which begot them.

For creeds are always the product of the reflective temper, which spends its energy not in living but in thinking about life. "Man," writes Edward Caird, "is from the first self-conscious. . . . Slow as may be the movement of his advance, the time must at length come when he turns back in thought upon himself, to measure and criticise, to select and to reject, to reconsider and remould by reflexion the immediate products of his own religious life." While we cannot controvert this statement or question the validity of the reflective processes of the religious self-consciousness, we may not identify theological reflection with religious experience. Historically the creeds are simply an item of the theological process as a whole. And theology is not in itself religion. It is merely the science of religion. It bears the same relation to

life and has the same validity in life that all other sciences have, no less but no more.

The science of biology declares, for example, that protoplasm is the physical basis of life. It goes a step farther and resolves protoplasm into its constituent elements. Protoplasm is an unstable compound of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen. The possession of this knowledge, however, has not enabled any biologist to achieve synthetic protoplasm in a laboratory. The best that has been done is to persuade certain minute glycerin combinations to simulate the movements of an amoeba. But these moving drops of glycerin are not life, for they cannot assimilate food, nor can they reproduce themselves. Biology has plucked away from life all her mysteries but one—that central mystery, however, remains unread, how to create life itself. Only life can beget life. The science of theology stands in the same relation to the spiritual life as does the science of biology to physical life. Each of these sciences can describe its subject, neither of them can create the life it describes.

So even the newest and most credible creed is still impotent to create Christians. The burden which has been laid upon the creeds in the past is a burden which neither they nor any other science can be expected to bear. They serve to interpret and codify experience. They do not create the Christian life. To expect the simplest and on the whole the most satisfactory of the historic creeds, the Apostles' Creed, to generate the Christian idea of itself is to misunderstand its relation to history. Whatever may be said of its origins, that creed as we now know it is certainly the result of reflection upon the whole religious experience of the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic periods. It is an idea of an idea. And to expect it to recreate the original idea automatically is to make on it a demand which no science recognizes as valid. As certain also of our own teachers has very pungently put it, we do not repeat the creed of the Apostles that we may have the experience of the Apostles, we seek the experience of the Apostles that we may understand the creed of the Apostles.

Furthermore, most of the historic creeds were fashioned in times when the faith was in peril of change, so far as its forms were concerned, or in peril of death at the hand of the heretic. The creed-making impulses flourish in the time of controversy.

Some of the creeds carry in their text their own anathemas. Most of the creeds tacitly suggest the anathema hard by. It may well be, as Tennyson once said, that in religion we have to choose between bigotry and flabbiness. But if so that is the last option which the modern mind will accept. The whole moral and intellectual discipline of modern life cuts in the other direction, to the fashioning of a conviction which can be tolerant without being spineless, which can put away intolerance without becoming impotent.

This is the religious secret which the creed makers never understood. Of the creed maker it is written:

> Indifferent cruel, thou dost blow the blaze
> Round Ridley or Servetus; all thy days
> Smell scorched.

And it is just this scorched odor of the credal stuff of our religion which makes it offensive to the mind of to-day. For whatever else may be true of the deeper religious mind of our time, it never willingly lets go its hold upon the catholic idea. It has no vestige of interest in the circles which hate has drawn in Christian history to shut men out. Its only interest is in the circle which an outwitting love draws to take men in. It develops its position from the broad premise that whoever is not against us in this total matter of Christianity is for us. All these considerations militate against the use of the historic creeds even in revised forms as ideal definitions of the content of the Christian idea.

But beyond these considerations lies an inherent difficulty in the whole theological point of view, credal or systematic, which is often vaguely felt but seldom definitely stated. The earliest attempt to give an account of the Christian religion is in many respects the best—it was called by its first exponents "The Way." Whatever else the term may suggest it implies the idea of motion. Now theology is always inert, it catches life on "The Way" at some point in its progress and in some one posture, and then it presents this snapshot of a life in action as being the substance of that life. It is possible by taking these theological snapshots often enough and then by flashing them in rapid succession before the mind's eye, moving picture wise, to create a certain spurious impression of life itself. But the theological reel is at the best

jerky and inadequate, because each credal picture of the religious life is in itself a motionless thing. The inherent fallacy of the creeds, and, indeed, of all theological systems, as definitions of the Christian idea is the fallacy which is hidden in Zeno's famous puzzle about Achilles and the tortoise. The tortoise has the start of Achilles, but Achilles never can overtake the tortoise, because while Achilles is reaching the place where the tortoise started, the tortoise itself has moved on and there is always the receding margin for Achilles to make good. In other words, it is impossible to define motion in the terms of rest. And that is just what theology is always unconsciously attempting to do, to define an experience of "The Way" in the terms of rest.

The Thirty-nine Articles served in the day which drew them up as a fairly adequate account of the religious self-consciousness of the Church of England. But the religious mind of Anglicanism has not marked time at that point of the Way. "In the Church of England," says one of her latest members, "I see nothing but a body of people bound together by a Prayer Book and an agreement to differ upon every important point of doctrine." A little over a century ago the fathers of Congregationalism moved up onto Andover Hill to found an enduring theological City of God for the American Churches. They prefaced their venture with a creed, which in their haste they said should be "as permanent as the sun and stars forever." That creed lasted approximately seventy-five years, and died with Professor Park, who found himself at his latter end "the dauntless soldier of a forlorn hope." The longevity of any credal statement of religion varies inversely with the vitality of the free religious spirit.

A thousand books have been written about Oxford. It boasts its formal guidebooks by the hundred, its volumes of photographs, its historical brochures without number. But it was left for Thomas Hardy, when all has been said of Oxford that can be said in the ways of formal description, to suggest the central idea of Oxford. The lover of that dear, dear city must always turn in the end to the truly moving definition of Oxford in the opening pages of "Jude the Obscure." The boy Jude stands on his own Wessex hilltop and looks out to the northeast at twilight and sees the distant halo of the lights of Christminster.

" 'It is a city of light,' he said to himself.

'The tree of knowledge grows there,' he added, a few steps farther on.

'It is a place that teachers of men spring from and go to.'

'It is what you might call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion.'

After this figure he was silent a long while, till he added,

'It would just suit me.' "

Hardy understands the true method of life's definition. He is filled with unsuspected suggestions for the modern religionist. He writes in the same spirit of Angel Clare and unhappy Tess:

"With all his attempted independence of judgment, this advanced and well-meaning young man—a sample product of the last twenty-five years—was yet the slave to custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings. No prophet had told him, and he was not prophet enough to tell himself, that essentially this young wife of his was as deserving of the praise of King Lemuel as any other woman endowed with the same dislike of evil, her moral value having to be reckoned not by achievement but by tendency. . . . In considering what Tess was not, he overlooked what she was, and entirely forgot that the deficient can be more than the entire. . . . The beauty or ugliness of a character lay, not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed."

These words will bear almost direct translation into their religious equivalent. The creeds are the record of things done. They are never the statement of aspiration. Even the most emancipated of contemporary theologians who propose a drastic revision of all the creeds, is still more or less the slave to theological custom. He is harking back to the countless efforts of theology to define the vital motion of religion in the terms of intellectual arrest. What we need in contemporary religion is some prophet to persuade us that the Christian idea can never be so defined for more than the passing instant, and that the true history of the Christian idea lies among things sought, in tendency far more than in achievement.

Every vital character defines itself in this way. The song that

marked the turning of the tide of northern confidence during the Civil War was "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"—the voice of a purpose that was "marching on." In years to come we shall seek to recover the spirit which animated our country during the Great War. A hundred definitions will suggest themselves. But what will linger longest with the common mind is the memory of a thousand boys crowded into a Y. M. C. A. hut rocking the flimsy building with their songs. It was in their songs that they bore testimony to the deepest facts of their nature and character. They came from Maine and Florida, from East and West. And how did they define themselves? Not by singing, "My country, 'tis of thee," not in "America, the beautiful," not in "My Old Kentucky Home." It was when they started the roof from the rafters with "Over there, over there" that they told us the most significant truth about themselves. They defined themselves by their goal rather than by their origin.

There is nothing that modern theology needs so much as the courage to recast its definitions of the Christian life in this prophetic form. The domination of religious thought by the backward look of science has all but suppressed the entirely logical and defensible definition of being in the terms of its final cause rather than its first cause.

So far from forgetting the things that are behind, modern religion seems to be preoccupied with these things. It would reduce all the agonies of conscience and all the aspiration of the human soul to the various nervous states of our unstable selves. The Freudian zealot exorcises the devil but substitutes the Oedipus complex and the Electra complex. Religion is the by-product of a suppressed sex neurosis. We sit under the "Golden Bough" and are gradually disillusioned as to the validity of our whole religious experience. And eventually our retroactive religion is seen as a thing of untamed instincts from the jungle and superstitious primitive tabus. This whole point of view, which would fashion its definition of religion solely in the terms of its first cause, "finishes up Saint Paul by calling his vision on the road to Damascus a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic. It snuffs out Saint Teresa as an hysteric, Saint Francis of Assisi as an hereditary degenerate. George Fox's discontent with the shams of his age, and his pining for spiritual veracity, it treats

as a symptom of a disordered colon. Carlyle's organ tones of misery it accounts for by a gastro-duodenal catarrh."

And the net value of this whole retrospective temper as it is summed up in James's courageous verdict, is simply this, "Origins prove nothing."

A wistful piety has tried to reach a working definition of the religious life by negating the complexity of modern life and recovering the lost simplicity of some Golden Age, in the case of Christianity the Gospel Age. There is no initial error in religion so grave as the assumption that one has been born too late. To have to spend our days in a retroactive religious experience, whether for worse with Freudians or for better with the pietists, is a grievous penalty for living at all, and a poor substitute for the zest of life abundant. But all of these liabilities of contemporary Christianity have their origin in our docile subservience to the scientific preoccupation with first causes and a pseudo-scientific wistfulness which is always dreaming of the better days that were. We need not only the wholesome salt of the ancient Preacher's counsel, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this." We need even more the prophetic courage, which is good logic as it is good religion, to define our common Christianity in the terms of its destination. The things which a man aspires to be and is not yet may truly define him as well as comfort him.

The Pilgrim Churches understood this truth. Its undeveloped possibilities are still their noblest bequest to us. They fared forth into the darkness believing that "more light was yet to break," they committed themselves to the ways of God "made known and to be made known." There is about their initial venture, temporal and spiritual alike, the sense of vital motion, a definition of experience in the terms of purpose which is deeply Christian. They embodied their bond of Christian fellowship, their working definition of the Christian idea, in covenants rather than creeds. The distinction between the creed and the covenant is the absolutely vital distinction between achievement and purpose. The temper of the covenant maker is essentially the early ardent temper of pilgrims on the Way, who forget the things that are behind to press on to the things that are before, who count not

themselves to have apprehended, but who feel that they have been apprehended by the character of Christ.

There is in the fourth gospel a working definition of Christianity which our time would do well to ponder. It differs from the conventional static definitions of the Christian idea in terms of intellectual rest in that it seeks to define the Christian life in the terms of motion. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," says Christ. Or as the original has it more accurately, in the present participle, "Him that is coming to me I will in no wise cast out."

The Christian idea may submit to the theological snapshot from time to time. These photographs of its infancy and immaturity may be gathered into a history of dogma. They may even be thrown before the mind's eye as motion pictures of the Christian life. But in themselves they are not that life itself. Each of them is an inert representation once removed from life, and impotent of itself to reproduce life.

If the vague religious consciousness of our time, groping after some working definition of the Christian religion, is to find any statement congenial to its own methods of thought and intelligible to a generation alive with the sense of movement, that definition must take the form of the covenant rather than the creed, an expression of an ultimate ideal to be realized in the Way of discipline and discipleship, not by a guidebook account of the halfway houses of Christian history.

Whatever may be said of the content of the creeds, the general outlines of the character of Christ are reasonably intelligible and familiar. His moral courage, his patience, his sympathy, his purity, his catholic love, are beyond all question of a doubt. The individual life and the social order which contemplate these qualities and which are "on the way" to them, may safely be defined as Christian, whatever the untraveled road that still lies between the present fact and the ultimate ideal.

The only possible definition of the Christian religion which is catholic enough to embrace all sorts and conditions of disciples, and true enough to experience to serve as a vital principle of spiritual generation is some definition which is fashioned around the contagion of the person and character of Jesus. Harnack has pointed out in his "History of Dogma" that despite our modern subordi-

nation of the Great Man to his social whole, no religion has endured permanently in history which has not reverenced some historical individual as its founder, inspirer and rallying center. The noblest and most adequate of these impersonal religions, Neoplatonism, which sought to gather into itself all the deeper and more permanent aspects of the religions of the classical world, failed to capture and hold the mind of the third and fourth centuries primarily because it looked to no personal founder, and could adduce no leader who could be plunged as a concrete center for religious crystallization into the saturate solution of the ancient world. Conversely the persistence of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Confucianism is somehow irrevocably bound up with the historical facts of Jesus, Mohammed, Gautama and Confucius.

The distinction of Christianity, however, as against its great competitors, lies in its definition of Jesus as a goal rather than a point of departure. Christianity sees Jesus as the historical author of our faith, but even more truly it sees the character of Christ as the spiritual finisher of our faith. He is in Christian experience the object of aspiration even more than of memory. And the witness of life on the Way always has about it this prophetic quality which theology as a severe science never voices.

"Son of Man," writes George Matheson, "whenever I doubt of life, I think of Thee. Nothing is so impossible as that Thou shouldest be dead. I can imagine the hills to dissolve in vapor and the stars to melt in smoke, and the rivers to empty themselves in sheer exhaustion: but I feel no limit in Thee. Thou never growest old to me. Last century is old, last year is an obsolete fashion, but Thou art not obsolete. Thou art abreast of all the centuries. I have never come up with Thee, modern as I am."

Over the valley of Zermatt hangs the pyramid of the Matterhorn. No visitor to that valley is so lethargic that he is entirely without the desire to make the ascent. Some men stifle those impulses from an inherent laziness or cowardice. Some struggle up to the Hörnli and then turn back. Others realize that to make the climb means a preliminary discipline and spend their time in making more modest and obvious ascents, postponing the real task until some later time. And still the Matterhorn broods there century after century in perpetual challenge and summons.

In some such way the character of Jesus broods over the lower

levels of human character and history. There is no halfway house of achievement in the ascent of this ideal at which the ardent soul may stop and lay claim to the designation "Christian." "Christianity" does not begin where the undergrowth of secular interest stops, at some timber line of the ascent. Essential Christianity is always a matter of orientation and movement. Wherever a man may stand in the modern world, in whatever caste, class or race it matters not, if he sets his face resolutely toward the Christ ideal for human character and human society and begins to move in that direction he has a valid claim upon the term "Christian" as his most adequate form of self-designation. And in whatever halfway houses of motionless orthodoxy or piety a man may be, no matter how far up the ascent, if he has come to rest there and remains content with his past achievement and his survey of the slopes already ascended, he has sacrificed his right to this term Christian.

The ultimate ideal is often shrouded in clouds, though the main, bold outlines are again and again revealed. Of the character of Christ the pilgrim of the Way can only say:

> Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
> From the hid battlements of Eternity;
> Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
> Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again,
> But not ere him who summoneth
> I first have seen . . .
> His name I know and what his trumpet saith.

CHAPTER II.

The Historical Jesus and the Problem of Religious Authority.

THERE is a couplet in one of his sonnets on "Modern Love" in which George Meredith says,

> Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
> When hot for certainties in this our life.

The great religions of authority have all attempted to meet the demand of the human soul for certainty. But seen in retrospect most of the claims made by these religions and many of the certainties offered are dusty answers, at the best.

The history of Christianity constantly implies that there ought to be and must be somewhere a sufficient seat of spiritual authority. For nothing is so characteristic of real religion as its inherent imperiousness. Behind the old Calvinistic doctrine of the Irresistible Grace of God lies a universal fact in religious experience, of which the successive centers of authority have been the outward and visible symbol. This fact of experience is the aggression of the spiritual order, of God and of conscience upon the individual, and then of the religious individual upon his world. From the days when Elijah fled from God into the wilderness, through the days when God imperiously sought Augustine, down to the days when the divine aggression conquered Tolstoi, this fact is written plain in all religious biography and autobiography. And as for the place and power of the religious man in history, Kipling humorously remarks in one of his Indian stories that there is only one thing more terrible in battle than a regiment of desperadoes officered by a half dozen young daredevils, and that is a company of Scotch Presbyterians who rise from their knees and go into action convinced that they are about to do the will of God.

Nothing is so much needed in contemporary Christianity as the recovery of this central temper of historic religion. Modern Christianity in its desire to be conciliatory and irenic has suppressed this mood of imperious aggression. Furthermore, it has been thrown on the defensive by the onslaught of the natural sciences, and by the wholesale criticism of a candid neopaganism. The recovery of the ability to go into the field of history under the leading of the legend *"Deus Vult"* is part of the task of contemporary Christianity. Without this sense of certainties accredited by a sufficient authority, religion is always impotent and at a strategic disadvantage.

There are not wanting signs of the times which point to the recovery of this central temper of the religious consciousness. Whatever may be said in criticism of Mr. Wells's "Invisible King," this must be said in his favor, that he has something of the quality of spiritual imperiousness about him and, as every student knows, the strength of the elder orthodoxy lay in its doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. This modern religion, we are told, no longer tarries to argue, it relates. And its Captain goes through our world like a fife and drum corps, as real as a bayonet thrust. All this is very alien to the pacific liberalism of our time, but it stands nearer the central mood of historic Christianity than do the half-hearted and tentative hypotheses which pass for Christian faith in our time.

"Religion, therefore, does not apologize for itself, does not stand on the defensive, does not justify its presence in the world. If theorists would vindicate Religion, they may do so; but Religion comes forth in the majesty of silence, like a mountain amid the lifting mists. All the strong things of the world are its children; and whatever strength is summoned to its support is the strength which its own spirit has called into being. Religion never excuses its attitude, and when at last a voice is lifted up it simply chants the Faith, until the deaf ears are unstopped and the dead in spirit come out of their graves to listen. There is nothing so masterful; and it speaks as one who has a right to the mastery. It is the major control of thought, to which all systems whatsoever bear witness, either silent or confessed. Authority is not what it requires but what it confers.

. . . The great-heartedness of religion craves expression and must be expressed. There is a moment in the act of worship when neither the prayer of contrition nor the hymn of adoration will satisfy, when the Will breaks the leash of constraint with which the understanding has held it back, and launches itself in triumphant affirmation, and with the full force of its argument within it, against all that is irrational, dark, or terrible in the world. The precautions of apology and self-defence are now abandoned; the baggage train is emptied and left behind; the soul ceases to parley with Principalities and Powers, and, in a joy that is free from all fetters, lifts on high the battle-hymn of its faith with its deep refrain, 'I believe.' . . . Religion, no longer entrenched behind bulwarks, is now seen marching in the open like an army with banners, the Ark of the Covenant in the midst, and the trumpeters going on before. Isaiah and Jesus had no other conception of religion than this. They spake with authority and the note of triumph was in their voices."*

The moral exhilaration of such a spectacle cannot be denied. No great or permanent achievement in Christian history has been realized without this initial temper. How to recover this mood is part of the problem of contemporary Christianity. And its recovery is bound up with the answer to the persistent problem of the seat of religious authority.

In the past, great churches have laid total claim to the possession of this authority. The temporal efficiency of these churches has been demonstrated over and over again. But their spiritual efficacy has been another matter. What halts the modern man in his submission to any and all of these centers of ecclesiastical efficiency is the memory of the by-products of superstition and intolerance which they have worked. When the Westminster Assembly first met in London it was led in prayer by a self-willed prelate whose petition ran, "Lord, we beseech thee that thou wilt guide us aright, for we are very determined." The petitioner undoubtedly identified his will with the Will of God. But the student of history finds it hard to avoid the suspicion that as a matter of moral fact the process was reversed.

Christian history has seen three outstanding efforts to establish

* "The Alchemy of Thought," L. P. Jacks, pp. 314, 315, 318.

a sufficient arbitrary seat of external religious authority. The first was the effort of the Roman Church to monopolize spiritual authority for itself through its Councils and Pope. There is no emancipated Protestant who is entirely free from the religious appeal made by the Roman assumption of authority. One such observer noticed in the military hospitals in France the difference between the ministry of Catholic and Protestant chaplains to the dying. The Roman priest entered, made the official gesture of religion and proffered the certainties of absolution and salvation. The Protestant chaplain entered, ventured a few tentative hypotheses as to the probability of immortality and let the matter rest there. It is no wonder, in those crucial moments when the human soul craves certainty, or at least the note of certainty, and is not too critical of the vehicle of that certainty, that it is tempted to turn and make its submission to Rome.

And it is not to be wondered at, in a time when the trumpet of liberalism gives forth an uncertain sound, that many who are tired of the dusty muted answers of that liberalism turn as a last resort to the sounding brass of Catholicism. The motives which led Newman, Manning, Faber, Hugh Benson and many others over into Catholicism are varied and complex. Newman says that he could not explain the reasons for his conversion in a few words, that he could hope to give an intelligible account of his course only to those who were willing to pay the cost of living over again with him all his troubled transition years.

But we shall not be far from the central fact if we attribute to all such the hunger for certainty and security. Newman writes in the *"Apologia"* of "The position of my mind since 1845" that entering the Church of Rome "was like coming into port after a rough sea." The only difficulty is that for most of us this anchorage under the lee of the great headlands of Catholic authority seems no longer safe. The wind has hauled around and what was once a shelter now becomes a mere inlet of the open sea. Hundreds of devout spirits lying in this port have dragged anchor dangerously. Catherine of Siena found poor anchorage for her soul in the person of her pope. The author of "Piers Plowman" found little moral stability in the ecclesiasticism of the fourteenth century. And as for the Modernists, their situation became so desperate that rather than risk their souls longer in this port of

refuge now invaded by the gale they put out to sea, preferring to claw off to windward in the face of the storm of skepticism rather than to run the risk of making shipwreck of their faith on the lee shore of Romanism. Newman was a rare soul, but he does not command the intellectual respect of free men, who prefer, in want of some securer harbor of authoritative refuge, the risks of the open ocean.

> Shall we award
> Less honor to the hull which, dogged
> By storms, a mere wreck, waterlogged,
> Masts by the board, her bulwarks gone
> And stanchions going, still bears on?

There ought to be a Church like the Roman Catholic Church, but that Church is not to be the permanent port of shelter that Newman hoped. Its moral holding ground has been found uncertain, and it no longer offers an intellectual lee shore under which to lie.

The second great center of religious authority was the Protestant Bible. The curious thing about the first two generations of Protestant Reformers was their lack of faith in their own method. They were on the way to revise the whole conception of religious authority, but they lacked the courage of their initial conviction. They saw the naked and uncorrected individualism of their early temper leading not only to Geneva but to Münster. And to prevent Münster from multiplying indefinitely they were compelled to sacrifice the possibilities of Geneva. The latter years of Luther's life are sad reading. He began his independent religious adventure with a great freedom of mind. No higher critic has ever outdone Luther in the matter of a cavalier reëditing of the Bible. Luther played fast and loose with all parts of Scripture which did not serve to buttress his own propositions. He read out of the canon everything that savored of the strawlike religion of Saint James. The Book of Esther he despised as a pagan story, and as for the whole Apocalyptic literature, it troubled him so deeply that he wished it were not there at all. But he feared in other men the consequences of a temper which he trusted in himself, and he sacrificed his own early intellectual liberty to save his cause.

Calvin took up the case and carried it to its theological conclusion, where it rested for nearly three hundred years in Protestant

history. Religious authority is vested in the letter of the Bible. The significant thing about Calvin's argument, however, is the fact that he fell into a vicious circle of logic of which he was conscious, yet from which he saw no escape. He asks in the "Institutes" how we know that the Bible is the word of God and then he answers, By the testimony of the Spirit within our own souls. But how are we to know, he continues, that the spirit within us is the Holy Spirit of God? By checking this Spirit at the standard of Scripture, is his answer. He naïvely remarks that there is nothing repugnant in this circling proof. That may be so, but to the unillumined there is nothing convincing about such logic moving in a vicious circle. What Browning said of his preacher in "Christmas Eve," who dog-eared the Scriptures in his effort to prove its authority, is equally true of Calvin. We sense "the natural fog of the good man's mind." And as for the logic

> Each method abundantly convincing,
> As I say, to those convinced before,
> But scarce to be swallowed without wincing
> By the not-as-yet-convinced.

The Protestant effort to establish the Scripture as a seat of religious authority represented a moral advance beyond the actual authority of the Roman ecclesiastics. But it was no more permanent than the Roman claim. It was doomed to go to pieces before the advent of the historical and natural sciences. There are few churches left which hold to the traditional Protestant conception of the authority of Scripture. What is significant in the whole story is the part which subjective interpretation played from the first. The Bible has never been beyond the need of interpretation and adaptation. Moreover the effort to prove it a moral unit forced the conscience into situations so grotesque that they were self-refuting. The Calvinist proposition that in his official capacity God has done and has to do a great many things which personally he would prefer not to do is an ethical absurdity. The significant feature of such a statement is the intrusion of a private moral judgment which really condemns a Jael and Sisera episode even when it seems to approve it.

In admitting that the consent of the indwelling Spirit is necessary to establish the authority of Scripture, Calvinism from the

first recognized the inevitableness of the subjective factor. Although it temporarily arrested the full fruition of the Protestant principle, it did not permanently postpone it, and from the first it had in it the latent principle which was to overthrow its own standard of authority.

The third attempt to establish a seat of external authority is found in the liberal Protestant preoccupation, during the nineteenth century, with the person of the historical Jesus. The recovery of the Jesus of history in something of his original integrity will remain the outstanding achievement of the religious mind of the last hundred years. We now have what all the intervening centuries have lacked, an adequate account of Jesus' religious backgrounds in historical Judaism. We have an intimate knowledge of his wider social environment in the cosmopolitan Roman Empire. Archaeology and geography have given us the homely physical setting of his life and work. Secluded monasteries have yielded up ancient and forgotten manuscripts with variant gospel readings. The sands of Egypt have added their fragmentary logia, until to-day there is almost nothing left to be done or more to be hoped for in this direction. The task of collection, comparison, codification of facts and texts is over, and the task of interpretation begins.

Royce has told us that historically Christianity has never appeared simply as the religion taught by the Master, it has always been an interpretation of the Master and his religion in the light of some subjective premise. The nineteenth century of liberal Protestant theology began its work with the axiom that whatever Christianity may have been in the past it ought now to be simply the religion of the Master, free from this constant taint of subjectivity introduced by the interpreter. It set up the Jesus of history in contrast to the Christ of the creeds, and cast its lot with the former as against the latter figure. It announced the simon-pure religion of Jesus in place of the confused and complex religions about Jesus. This controversy has occupied the center of religious interest for the past half century.

With it has gone the tacit and often the avowed claim that in the person of the historical Jesus the Christian has found his final seat of sufficient religious authority. The modern soul, still hot for spiritual certainty, is bidden to turn from the dusty answers

alike of Romanism and of Calvinism to the single vital historical figure of Jesus. There is no doubt that, in so far as any center of external Christian authority is possible, the Jesus of history is the most adequate and admirable that has been found or can be found. And many a man has come to rest in this port who found poor shelter in the prior anchorages of the soul. This central modern distinction between the religion about Jesus and the religion of Jesus has solved for many their problem of authority.

> How easily my neighbor chants his creed,
> Kneeling beside me in the House of God.
> His "I believe" he chants, and "I believe,"
> With cheerful iteration and consent—
> Watching meantime the white, slow sunbeam move
> Across the aisle, or listening to the bird
> Whose free, wild song sounds through the open door.
>
> Thou God supreme,—I too, I too, believe!
> But oh! forgive if this one human word,
> Binding the deep and breathless thought of thee
> And my own conscience with an iron band,
> Stick in my throat. I cannot say it, thus—
> This "I believe" that doth thyself obscure;
> This rod to smite; this barrier; this blot
> On thy most unimaginable face
> And soul of majesty.
>
> 'Tis not man's faith
> In thee that he proclaims in echoed phrase,
> But faith in man; faith not in thine own Christ,
> But in another man's dim thought of him.
>
> Christ of Judea, look thou in my heart!
> Do I not love thee, look to thee, in thee
> Alone have faith of all the sons of men—
> Faith deepening with the weight and woe of years.*

That is the voice of nineteenth-century liberalism at its best. And it carries conviction to the modern mind where the claims of Catholicism and the devious ethics of the theory of a uniformly inspired and authoritative Bible carry no conviction.

But the curious fact about this whole century of effort to enthrone Jesus as the world's final external principle of religious authority is that never in the appeal to any principle of authority

* "Credo," Richard Watson Gilder.

has the subjective factor been so prominent and apparently so inevitable. The record of the hundred years' "Quest of the Historical Jesus" has been told once for all by Schweitzer. And the net result of a comparison of the diverse results of this quest is the plain conclusion, as Schweitzer tells us, that every man in writing the life of Jesus writes even more truly the story of his own life. It is not merely that a living personality is needed to call another remote historical personality to life. It is far more than that, the plain fact that the gospel does not admit of mechanical imitation but demands vital interpretation.

This necessity is bound up in the very nature of the writing of all history and biography. There is no escape from it in the reconstruction of the life of any great man. James Anthony Froude in his essay on "The Science of History" lays down an axiom which every gospel reader must accept as the premise of his quest for the person of Jesus.

"It often seems to me as if history was like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose. . . . To revert to my simile of the box of letters, you have to select such facts as suit you, you have but to leave alone those which do not suit you, and let your theory of history be what it will, you can find no difficulty in providing facts to prove it. . . . In any or all views, history will stand your friend. History in its passive irony will make no objection. Like Jarno, in Goethe's novel, it will not condescend to argue with you, and will provide you with abundant illustrations of the thing you wish to believe. . . . 'My friend,' said Faust, to the student growing enthusiastic about the spirit of the past ages, 'my friend, the times which are gone are a book with seven seals; and what you call the spirit of past ages is but the spirit of this or that worthy gentleman in whose mind those ages are reflected.' "

We can see the process at work within the limits of the four gospels themselves. The first three synoptic gospels are photographs of Jesus. The fourth gospel is candidly a portrait. But even the three photographs are not identical. Mark's gospel probably comes the nearest to being an untouched original, but it is a perfectly open question whether the practices of the Roman Church

in the first century have not entered into the making of that gospel. As for the first and third gospels, the negative has obviously been retouched, in the first instance to make it conform more closely to the Messianic expectation, in the latter case to take away the more severely Jewish lines from the face of Christ and to give that face a fuller cosmopolitanism.

As for the fourth gospel, all attempt at literary photography has been abandoned, and we have instead a candid portrait, which succeeds not only in emphasizing certain lineaments of the Christ, but which also betrays the experience of the artist. The subjective element is so strongly infused into the treatment of the theme that again and again in the early part of the gospel we find a chapter beginning with what profess to be the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus and ending with the reflections of the evangelist. But the whole chapter is of a single literary and spiritual texture, and it is impossible to tell where the words of Jesus are supposed to end and the meditations of the writer begin. Yet it is this quality of the fourth gospel which gives it its perennial charm and power, and which makes it what the synoptic gospels never can quite be, the voice of Christian experience. We shall never recover the original literary negative. Such negatives as we have have all been retouched, and before we use them we shall retouch them still farther. More than that, most of us in our study of the character of Jesus are candidly Johannine, creative artists treating our subject as free interpreters. It cannot be otherwise.

In his "History of European Morals," Lecky describes in detail the two temperaments which William James has roughly differentiated as the "tough" and the "tender" natures. He says:

"The first are by nature Stoics, and the second Epicureans, and if they proceed to reason about the *summum bonum* of the affections, it is more than probable that in each case their characters will determine their theories . . ." for there is a "predisposition which leads men in their estimate of the comparative excellence of different qualities to select for the highest eulogy those which are most congruous to their own characters."

This axiom, which underlies all historical writing, as well as all ethics and philosophy, never had clearer exemplification than in the so-called modern biographies of Jesus.

Recall for the moment some of the outstanding lives of Jesus of

recent years. The subjective element of the interpreter is plainly visible in them all. He who runs reads not so much the bare facts about Jesus as the chronicle of the religious ideals of all sorts and conditions of men who have been drawn to Jesus.

Renan's "Life of Jesus" is patently three parts Renan and one part Jesus. "It is Christian art in the worst sense of the word, the art of the wax image. The gentle Jesus, the beautiful Mary, the fair Galileans who formed the retinue of the amiable carpenter might have been taken in a body from the shop window of an ecclesiastical art emporium in the Place St. Sulpice." Harnack made a consistent and conscientious effort to give us a true and credible picture of the Jesus of history, but of this effort Tyrrell says, with swift ironic insight, "The Christ that Harnack sees looking back through nineteen centuries of Christian dogma is nothing but the reflection of a liberal Protestant face seen at the bottom of a deep well." To Voltaire Jesus was merely the greatest of the moralists, and his picture of Jesus simply an item in the rising humanitarian passion of a hundred odd years ago. Goethe and the Romantic school found in Jesus an incarnation of their deity, Genius. To Carlyle, Jesus was the greatest of heroes. Strauss was a Hegelian, and his life of Jesus owes its whole form and movement to Hegel rather than to the original gospels. Matthew Arnold read into the gospels and then out of them the mildness and sweet reasonableness of Balliol and Oxford. Tom Hughes found a justification for his own virile pugnacity in a "Manliness of Christ" which savors far more of the Philistine life of an English public school than of the Mount of Beatitudes. Wagner saw in Jesus the inspirer of his romantic dramas of love, sin and redemption. Tolstoi's familiar and arresting interpretation of the gospel owes most of its potency to the temperamental quietism of Russian Christianity. Wendell Phillips, facing the stolid hostility of respectable Boston, was drawn to Jesus as "the sedition of the streets." Oscar Wilde in Reading jail read Jesus as the artist at life, and found a sweetly melancholy satisfaction in the thought that he might prove another such great artist and actor. Shaw reads out of the gospels the tenets of economic communism to which he has long been committed. Bouck White finds in Jesus the sanctions for his own radical socialism.

When we come to less distinguished but not less assured inter-

preters of Jesus in our own circles, the appeal to Jesus as a sanction and authoritative pattern lapses often into the grotesque. One polished young gentleman of our own time has been credited with the profound critical observation that Jesus' turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee was inspired by his wish to save his hostess from her temporary embarrassment—Jesus was, in short, the perfect guest and the polished ladies' man at the hostess's right hand by the tea table. Another and more virile college boy, who brought home from France an army boxing championship, has told us that whatever else might be true of Jesus he certainly would take an interest in amateur boxing, and would give good measure of time to the squared circle and the gloves.

The subjective quality in the appeal to the authority of Jesus which is not sensed in the case of the great scholars, and which is usually entirely unsuspected in ourselves, becomes humorously patent in the case of the ladies' man and the boxing champion. The whole record reveals one fact and one only, that the historical figure of Jesus, his life and teaching, so far from being free from the need of interpretation, seem to compel the introduction of this whole subjective factor.

Schweitzer says of this century of effort to arrive at and to establish a final center of Christian authority in the person of Jesus that: "The critical study of the life of Jesus has been for theology a school of honesty. The world has never seen before and it will never see again a struggle for truth so full of pain and renunciation as that of which the lives of Jesus of the last hundred years contain the cryptic record." But this quest was not a struggle for truth in any dispassionate sense of the word. It was a discipline in intellectual sincerity and moral courage. It was a test of men's creative spiritual resourcefulness rather than an occasion for their imitative tendencies. For it is perfectly clear that there never has been and never can be an "imitation" of Jesus, pure and simple. Every relationship to him must take the form of a personal experiment and adventure.

The nature of our problem and a clue as to the nature of its answer is given us when we leave the field of criticism and appeal directly to our own experience in the world of men. The figure of Jesus is used to-day as a religious sanction for every conceivable

type of thought and conduct. The facts of the gospel are too complex to lend themselves to any single type of character or society to the exclusion of all other moral variants. Each man gathers out of the record what is congenial to his own nature and circumstance and then reconstructs a figure from whom he draws authority for his own living. Only those facts live for us which life has made probable and vital in advance. The Jesus of one man is essentially a conservative, centered on the jot and the tittle. The Jesus of another man is a radical, subjecting the Sabbath and all other human institutions to his own transvaluation. The Jesus of this man is a militarist behind the guns or urging the bayonet home to its destination. The Jesus of another is a pacifist, serving his time in Wormwood Scrubs or Leavenworth. The gospels record both the scourge of small cords and the nonresistance of the cross. It is hard to reconcile them and each man chooses what bears out his own predisposition. The Jesus of one is a churchman, who goes into the synagogue as is his custom. The Jesus of another is a free lance, tilting at the whited sepulchers of ecclesiasticism. To the family man Jesus is the hallower of marriage, to the priest he is the pattern of celibacy. The total impression of the gospels is that of a character too catholic and free, too deep and too broad, to be monopolized by any of our narrow working categories of creed or conduct, but lending himself in part to all.

What there is of authority in this figure comes not as a clear, final, sufficient statement of the things men are to believe and to do, but as a stimulus to freedom and a source of unfailing spiritual energy. The drift of Christian experience has been steadily and increasingly in the direction of the inner conviction, away from the outward precept. That is what is significant about the whole story. Our last center of authority, this person of the historical Jesus, while promising more, seems as a matter of actual fact to have achieved less than any of its predecessors in establishing its claim to external sufficiency.

But it is for that very reason that the person of the historical Jesus stands as the best the Christian mind has done to define its conception of authority, not merely because its standard is higher than that of ecclesiasticism and the total Bible, but because it forces the soul seeking for assurance on to the only permanent certainty which religion knows or ever can know, what Carlyle

has nobly called "the fixed indubitable certainty of experience." An English novelist writes: "A man's religion is not something without any definite connection with his own life. It is the answer to the questions that have been put to him and not to other men." Not only so, but if a man's religion is to be his own in any vital sense, the answers to life's questions, as well as the questions themselves, must be his own.

The effort to get someone else to answer life's problems for us, whether that someone else be the Roman Curia or the author of the Book of Judges or even Jesus himself, is an essentially irreligious effort. A man's religion, of all his possessions, ought to be his own. And what is wanting in the whole effort to establish a seat of external authority is the willingness to learn of life itself, which is the true hall-mark of a disciple. It would be very pleasant and very easy if we might find some principle of authority which should relieve us of the splendid and tragic necessity of having to live our spiritual lives for ourselves. But that would be a sacrifice of the central quality of all true religious experience, and it would be a blindness to the cumulative witness drawn from the history of the several tentative authorities in Christian history. For that witness points only in one direction, to the steady increment of the inner and subjective contribution to religion's imperiousness.

George Tyrrell said all that can be said on this whole matter when he said that life itself is the only schoolmaster that leads us to Christ. There is no way of making spiritually good the claim of Jesus to our devotion and discipleship other than the response which has its origin in our own experience. The person of the historical Jesus is authoritative for us only in so far as it interprets and reinforces the teaching and discipline of life. His authority carried permanent weight in his own time only with those few whose natures were fitted to respond to his call. He refused to summon his legion of angels to make good that authority on some basis other than the subjective basis. He left the problem of authority where it must finally rest, with the character of the disciple, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The Inquisition may torture the heretic in the name of authority, Calvin may burn Servetus, the Puritans may hang the Quakers on Boston Common, modern states may sentence nonresisters to hard labor in the name of the Jesus of the scourge of cords, departments of justice may

prosecute Communists in the name of Jesus who had no property, but these familiar and outworn resorts add nothing to the real solution of the problem of religious authority; they are expedients of the powers that be.

What finally strikes the student of the gospels is the fact that Jesus withheld the pressure of all temporal argument and force that he might let his authority rest from the first where at last it must rest, in the response of the believing soul. One thing he was not, he was not a rule maker. He was a contagion of enthusiasm, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life—but what ethical machinery the fires of his enthusiasm were to turn and what viaducts were to be laid across history from the undying springs of his character he did not specify. He seems only to have feared lest in becoming an Example he cease to be an Inspirer.

And it is not far away to suppose, where Christians are still mired in deep misunderstanding and recrimination, each claiming the authority of Jesus for ways of thought and conduct mutually exclusive, that he himself stands outside both, and in some measure comprehending both. In so far as the nature of his Father was his entire nature, the dayspring of his gospel still rises on all those who are trying to conduct their moral affairs on the presumption that our tentative distinctions between the just and the unjust are ultimate moral realities. The final moral energy of Jesus lies, in some measure, in that quality of him which is "beyond good and evil," at least beyond our imperfect and tentative measure of good and evil. This is simply to say that Jesus belongs far more to the world of religion than to the world of ethics.

We find ourselves thus driven by the comparative study of the efforts to recover the historical Jesus, and by a simple glance at the facts of our total Christian thought and conduct to-day, to the conclusion that the forced option between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the creeds embodies a fallacy. For the two are one. There never has been, there cannot be, a Jesus of history apart from some Christ of the creeds, that is, some translation of the one into the other. The case of Jesus must always rest upon interpretation rather than upon imitation. This modern Christ may not be the Christ of any historically recognizable creed, but he will be none the less qualitatively identical. Richard Watson Gilder cannot worship some other man's dim thought of Christ.

But he cannot escape from his own thought of Christ to some Jesus about whom he has no advance opinions and ideas. And were he to find such a dispassionate, arbitrary and external authority, in the very nature of the case he could not consent to it. For the spiritual government of Jesus rests upon the consent of the governed, and it is that consent which creates his authority.

We must grant, then, that the effort of a simple and devoted piety in our time to define Christianity and to establish its authority as an answer to the question, "What would Jesus do?" is doomed to failure. The plain answer to this question in nine out of ten of life's practical crises is, "We do not know what Jesus would do." We know what his principles are, we sense the outlines of his character, but just what they mean in any single tangled and complex situation before us the gospels do not tell us.

Does Jesus stand for the forty-four-hour week in the mills as against the forty-eight-hour week? If he stands for the former does he stand for the candid demand for only a four- or five-hour working day? Has he anything to say on the problem of interest? What dividends may a Christian accept on his money investments? Is a four per cent dividend Christian and a ten per cent dividend unchristian? What would the attitude of Jesus be toward the problem of modern citizenship and statesmanship? Could he align himself with any party? If so, which party? And if with no party, how would he relate himself to the Caesars of our day? Would he preach, as Paul and Peter preached, the duty of obedience to the powers that be, or would he preach, with Thoreau, the duty of civil disobedience? What would be his attitude toward so simple a question as that of Sunday observance? Would he be a defender of the Puritan blue laws or a spokesman for the continental Sunday? What about our amusements? Would he sanction the theater, and if so where would he draw the moral line between his approval and his disapproval? Would he be interested in the problem of eugenics, and what would he have to say of the shifting conceptions of the sex relationships?

These are the practical problems which the average Christian faces to-day. His daily life brings them all to him as the raw stuff out of which, by his choice, he is to fashion his Christian character. And yet even the most simple and pious soul—the "*anima naturaliter Christiana*"—reads and rereads his gospels in

vain for any authoritative utterance upon these concrete moral options. He turns soberly away from the gospels with the mature conviction that he must answer these questions for himself, that the historical Jesus will not relieve him of the privileges and responsibilities of his human freedom.

Perhaps Jesus never intended to relieve us of the great human obligation of moral liberty. Perhaps the Apostolic Age was right when it felt that it was never more free and more responsible than in the moment of its inner experience of Christ. Perhaps Paul was right when he said that God works in history only through those who work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. If that be so, then the whole quest for an external authority is based upon a misconception of the religious life, and has about it the fears which are born of inexperience and immaturity.

The nineteenth century not only dissipated the Christ of the creeds, it did what it least intended to do, it overshot the Jesus of history whom, in Schweitzer's words, it hoped to bring direct into our own time as a teacher and leader. It could not escape from the logic of the quest for authority which increasingly has led us home to present experience itself.

It may be expedient for our time, as it was expedient for another remote generation, that our historical Jesus shall go away. That may be the only way in which we can discover our true relation to him. For the moment when we cease to use him as a pattern to be woodenly imitated, or as a dictator to be blindly obeyed, is the moment when we discover what he really means to us. The simplest definition of Jesus which the world has ever known is that which designates him as the Friend of Man. Men to whom the title Messiah means nothing, men to whom the Logos Christology of the Greek fathers is a riddle, can still understand what Jesus is as a Friend.

For what is the definition of a friend, and what is the function of friendship? The relation between friends is not that between a teacher and a pupil, between the pattern and the copy. It is in some measure a relation of equals. And it is to such equality that the mind of Jesus is always leading the disciple. "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends."

There was gathered in Concord a half century and more ago, a little group of men who had brought the sacrament of friendship

to a high point of perfection. What was characteristic of that circle was the quickened individuality of each member. The significant thing about friendship to them was not its imitative tendencies, but the sting to sincerity and freedom which they found in their high comradeship. "A friend," says Emerson, "is a person before whom I may be sincere." "A friend," adds Thoreau, taking up the tale, "never descends to particulars but advises by his whole behavior."

The friendship of the disciple with his Master is not other in kind than all our human friendships at their best. The initial fact of every man's relation to Jesus is the fact that when he thinks of Jesus he not only may be sincere, he must be sincere. The central compulsion which Jesus lays upon us is to be our deepest and truest selves. The historical Jesus does not suffer us to practice the self-deceptions, the social conventions which pass as the coin of common life. He is the world's prover of the thoughts of many hearts, history's perpetual challenge to moral and intellectual integrity. In his presence, as we read the gospels, we know ourselves, for better and for worse, as we truly are. Jesus is the touchstone of the realities of character. He is the sting and spur to inner truthfulness. The half-gods are content with less than our true selves, and will accept the conventional time service that we render. Jesus is the son of the whole-God who challenges us perpetually to dare to be ourselves and to take the consequences of that tremendous courage.

And then the modern disciple still draws direct from Jesus what he draws from every real friend—that potent counsel which comes from the whole character, rather than moral instruction given line upon line. How often in our human perplexities do we go to some friend with our burden of anxiety and indecision, hoping that he will shrive us of the great liabilities of freedom, wishing him to solve our problem for us. And yet in the moment of our going we know that we go in vain. And when we leave the friend, if he be a true friend, we bring away with us what our better selves already had anticipated, not advice, but courage, hope, new strength to live our own lives. Our friend serves us not by the exercise of a vicarious wisdom, but by the subtler and more potent ministry of sympathy which replenishes the reservoirs of our own power.

It is not otherwise with the great Friendship that the disciple has with Jesus. What we draw from the thought of Jesus is spiritual strength. And that is what we need. The central problem of the religious life is the problem of power, not of moral ways and means. Jesus stands in the history of religion to meet that major need, not to arbitrate its minor difficulties. "Again and again," said Tyrrell, "I have been tempted to give up the struggle, but always the figure of that strange man hanging on his cross sends me back to my task again." The gospels are not the place where the free sons of God may resort to the Virgilian lot to settle the practical problems which arise in the exercise of liberty. They are the storehouse of that liberty, and the seat of Christian energy. They stand there to emancipate us, not to coerce us. The felt imperiousness of the historical character of Jesus lies in this constant suggestion of a morally inexhaustible reservoir of spiritual energy upon which he who will may draw in the time of his need. Out of weakness we become, in the comradeship of Jesus, strong in ourselves. And that, the New Testament seems to say from first to last, is what Jesus desired for us.

It will be perfectly apparent from such an interpretation of the authority of Jesus that he stands in human imagination and devotion in an essentially mediatorial position. He points the human soul beyond himself to God. All that has been said of the person of Jesus as the Friend of Man may be said and must be said of God. God is the ultimate Friend of Man and any Christianity which stops short of this destiny of all true devotion fails to honor Jesus and falls short of true religion.

Christian theology at its best has always had the courage of this fearless conviction as to the final meanings of the character of Christ. No false loyalty to the Jesus of history, no overjealous doctrine of the Trinity has ever stayed the homing soul of man, once come to itself and faced about to go unto its Father. Of the finished work of Jesus in history, his earliest great interpreter said, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even his Father . . . that God may be all in all." When Jesus shall have led his disciples to that mature moment in which they realize their eternal friendship with God his task is fulfilled in the mutual experience whereby our life "is hid with Christ in God."

Meantime, to us groping in the far countries of our perplexity and wastrel sonship, Jesus is history's best sign and pledge of the character of God. "The Christian religion," writes Josiah Royce, "is, thus far, man's most impressive vision of salvation and his principal glimpse of the homeland of the spirit." This vision is in part the vision of the ultimate beloved community. But it is also our prophetic intuition of the nature of him who keeps that homeland. Frederick W. H. Myers was once questioned, "If you could ask the Sphinx one question, and only one, what would that question be?" And Myers replied, "If I could ask the Sphinx one question, and one only, and hope for an answer, I think the question would be this, Is the Universe friendly?" In the midst of the unfriendliness of nature and man's inhumanity to man, this is the problem which challenges all modern religion. The historical figure of Jesus and the perennial power of the character of Christ owe their appeal to the suggested answer to this question. Christian theology has been, in its making, essentially inductive and empirical in method. All perversions of this method to the contrary, Christian thought does not start with a rigid premise as to the nature of God, and force Jesus into some hard category of divinity. Christian thought begins with the benevolences of common life which no minor pessimism can deny, and advances from them,

> The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
> Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
> The generous inclination, the just rule,
> Kind wishes and good actions, and pure thoughts—
> No mystery is here! Here is no boon
> For high nor yet for low; for proudly graced—
> Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
> To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
> As from the haughtiest palace. He whose soul
> Ponders this true equality, may walk
> The fields of earth with gratitude and hope.

To these initial pledges of the ultimate friendliness of the Mystery, Christianity in the fullness of human experience adds its vision of the character of Jesus: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." No man, Jesus least of all men, stands apart from the homeland of the human soul, whence we all come and to which we all return. Our devotion to him is merely our

consent to the clearest of all those earnests of nature and history which give us courage to believe that the Universe is friendly, that the Veiled Being is no passionless object of our unrequited desire, but is in very truth the Eternal Goodness. It is to all such farther and final considerations that the authority of Jesus leads the human mind on into the central energy of all religion, man's friendship with God.

It is expedient for us, therefore, that all centers of external authority shall pass away. For only by their passing can we enter into "the fixed indubitable certainty of experience" where the power of religion is finally vested. There is no inherent reason why the disciple who has been led onward to the Inner Light may not evidence in his discipleship that authority which has been imperfectly exercised by other claimants. He will make his errors, for all truth is not given to him, or to his generation in advance. But the constant testing of his sincerity of thought and purpose in the presence of the Friend of Man, and the unfailing access of counsel which comes from the total character of Christ will lead him more and more into that truth where Jesus lives, the finisher of our faith, as he was its historical author.

"He comes to us as one unknown without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word, 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who He is."*

* "The Quest of the Historical Jesus," Schweitzer, p. 401.

CHAPTER III.

Christian History and Dogma as Autobiography.

"THE human heart," says John Calvin, "is a perpetual forge of idols." Our Western World cherishes a supercilious contempt for the heathen who in his blindness bows down to wood and stone. As Gibbon in Rome allowed himself a furtive glance at her monuments of superstition, so the tourist in Japan deigns a visit to the Buddha at Kamakura. But in his heart of hearts he thanks God that he is not as those idolaters.

If Calvin be right, however, idolatry cannot be so easily and cheaply abjured. For wood and brass are not the only vehicles through which an idolatrous spirit expresses itself. The idols of the clan, the market place, the forum, and the pulpit may be as potent as the graven images of the alleged heathen. The gospel of "brass tacks" is as much an idolatry as the gospel of Gautama, and a good deal more so. As a matter of simple aesthetic judgment, brass tacks are vastly inferior to jade Buddhas as an object of veneration. And it is a fair question whether our commercial materialism has really achieved any moral and spiritual advance by substituting its brass tacks for the saints of yesterday and the gods of the nations. In other words, a man does not have to bow down to some image of an anthropomorphic deity to be an idolatrous heathen. He needs only to worship at the sign of the dollar, or any other crude material value, to set going again the idol forge in the human soul.

There are two great idolatries in contemporary Christianity from which the free man may pray to be emancipated. One is the idolatry of fact. The other is the idolatry of system. These two idols stand between the seeker and the Reality to obstruct his

vision of Truth. Each of them has a certain validity as a symbol of Reality. Yet the symbol has found such acceptance in the modern mind that the Reality is in constant danger of being obscured and forgotten, while the symbol usurps for itself the values and prerogatives of Reality. When this subtle but radical change takes place, when fact and system thrust themselves into the foreground as the objects of our worship, they make idolaters of us. For a fact may be as wooden as a totem pole, and a system as inhuman and impersonal as Moloch, and neither of them has of itself any life-giving power.

The veneration of fact is a by-product of the scientific spirit. At its best, modern science is essentially religious in its temper and leadings. But in its uninspired, chronic form it may sink into an idolatry pure and simple; a worship of information, of dates, names and places. In this debased form its ark of the covenant is a card catalogue, its holy of holies a reference library, its sacred scriptures an encyclopaedia, its priests and Levites our modern academic pedants.

Contemporary Christianity, invaded and overcome by the scientific spirit, has failed to sense what is essentially noble and deeply religious in the major prophecies of science at its best, but has accepted without question its minor prophecy of fact. In religion this has meant the elevation of the historical method to a prestige that for the moment is unchallenged. This method as it is now in vogue is primarily a quest for the naked event, the uninterpreted actuality.

In particular the Bible, and in general all religious history, have been subjected to this process. In our Bible, as it stands, there are two strands twisted so tightly as to give at first sight the impression of a single uniform stuff. One of these is the strand of actual happening. The other is the strand of contemporaneous interpretation. Prior to the advent of the historical sciences it never occurred to the Bible reader to distinguish between the two. He identified the two. The main contribution which the historical study of the Bible has made to religious thought is its unremitted effort to untwist the stuff of Scripture, to dissociate the event from the interpretation placed upon the event, to revise or to reject altogether the strand of interpretation, and to conserve and stress the strand of fact.

There is the very first story on the opening page of Genesis, the story of the Creation. The religious value of the story lies not in the fact as it was then comprehended, but in the interpretation of the fact. What were then held to be the facts were a matter of universal knowledge in the ancient world. The superiority of the Genesis narrative over the non-Biblical creation myths lies in the interpretation of the fact implied from the first, "In the beginning God." Modern geology and astronomy have dug down through the Genesis narrative to a deeper stratum of physical fact than was at first suspected. But they have withheld spiritual interpretation. Tyrrell sits in judgment on the dispassionate reign of fact over the modern mind when he says of the issues involved in any theory of creation:

"If our astronomy has in some way enlarged it has also impoverished our notion of the heavens. It has given us quantitative mysteries in exchange for qualitative. The once mysterious planets, and the sun itself, are but material orbs like our own; and as the mind travels endlessly into space it meets only with more orbs and systems of orbs in their millions, an infinite monotony of matter and motion, but never does it strike against some boundary wall of the universe, beyond which God keeps an eternal Sabbath in a new order of existence, a mysterious world which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived. The heaven that lay behind the blue curtain of the sky, whence night by night God hung out his silver lamps to shine upon the earth, was a far deeper symbol of the eternal home than the cold and shelterless deserts of astronomical space."

We moderns may be nearer the bare fact than the writer of the Pentateuch. But the uninterpreted fact is even less potent religiously than the interpretation of the facts as imperfectly sensed so long ago.

So again, there is no reason to doubt that the Hebrews fleeing from Egypt availed themselves at the Red Sea of some abnormally slack tide which laid bare a passage seldom open. That seems to have been the fact. But we feel free to challenge the theory of special providence which was used to interpret the fact in the light of our general conception of the ways of God in nature. What the bare ground in the bed of the Red Sea, the bare fact of the low tide, means, we hesitate to say. It remains for us, therefore, merely

to venerate the primitive fact, uninterpreted, as though it were of itself a suggestive and life-giving item of information.

Likewise, the most radical critic of the gospels does not hesitate to say that in the stories of the miracles, particularly the healing of mental disorders, there is a solid core of actuality. But he questions the theory of demoniacal possession by which the fact was then interpreted. There is no reason to doubt that Jesus quieted and restored to its normal poise the mind of the Gadarene demoniac. But that he effected a transfer of malign personalities from a man's brain to the brain of the swine is a doubtful explanation of the actuality. Animals sense in strange ways the mental and moral tension of human situations. Perhaps some such panic invaded the poor beasts of Gadara. The interpretation of the event is still an open question.

The severer historical methods would, indeed, reserve all judgments of interpretation, and would leave the naked uninterpreted fact standing in its bare actuality, as the object of our interest and veneration. Having restored to us the event as it was, the historian implies, usually, that he has done his perfect work. But no mental discipline which is not an interpretation of life can hope permanently to claim the loyalty of the human mind. The facts which history restores to us, if uninterpreted, may become as lifeless and morally impotent as the statues in the niches of the cathedral. And the time must come when the cathedrals of modern information, each with its reredos where fact is piled upon fact, will be invaded by some Cromwellian impatience of the human soul, which will demolish the arrogant fact with holy frenzy, will whitewash the walls where the frescoes of systems have been drawn, and will invite the human soul to a more direct worship of Reality.

William Roscoe Thayer, writing of "History—Quick or Dead," asserts flatly that:

"Four fifths of the history written up to the present time has been dead. . . . The worship of Fact, which must not be confounded with Truth, does not lead us far. To know that Columbus discovered America on October 12, 1492, or that the Declaration of Independence was made on July 4, 1776, or that Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815, is interesting; but unless these statements are reinforced by much matter of a different kind,

they are hardly more important for us than it would be to know the number of leaves on a tree. And this is true though the facts be indefinitely multiplied. I have read, for instance, an account of the American Revolution in which the uncontroverted facts followed each other in as impeccably correct a sequence as the telegraph poles which carry the wires over eight hundred and fifty miles of the desert of Gobi. The paramount interest in this case is not the number of poles but the purport of the telegrams flashed along the wires. . . . The meaning of the sequent or scattered events in any historical movement, be it of long duration, or merely a fleeting episode—that alone can have significance for us."

Martineau once paid his scant respects to those persons whom he called "archaeological Christians. . . . There may, perhaps, be logical devotees whose enthusiasm loves to reach their God by long and painful pilgrimages of thought; but it would not be a happy thing for natures of more direct and impatient affection to be left thus dependent for knowledge of divine things on literary, antiquarian, philological evidence, judicially balanced, analogous to that which scholars cite in discussing the Homeric poems, or the letters of Phalaris." Yet that is the method which has dominated the religious efforts of the last two generations. In other days Matthew, Mark and Luke and John were importuned to "bless the bed that I lie on." Nothing has been gained for religion by transferring that humble office to the personage known in gospel research as "Q—the Second Source." The modern mind, however, clings with a fanatic persistence to "the blessed Q," saying, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," but somehow the blessing tarries.

For we have had now a full and fair half century in our liberal churches of the working of the historical method in religion. Our preaching and our teaching have aimed to establish correct information as to the essential religious facts, and to relieve those facts, wherever and whatever they were, of the liabilities of imperfect interpretation by which their true outlines were obscured. There has been in the scientific treatment of fact a kind of deification of nakedness, and an impatience of the fantastic fashions of thought superimposed by past interpreters.

Yet what has been accomplished by the deification of naked fact, unclothed upon by any comment? The salvation of the world

still tarries. In commenting upon the failure of our whole modern system of religious education, revealed in the abysmal ignorance of the average British soldier as to the simple gospel facts, the members of the English symposium, who have issued a report on "The Army and Religion," do not hesitate to say that, "The nineteenth century aimed too much at imparting fact. . . . The conception of education as an endeavor to pack the mind with morally colorless facts has done untold damage. . . . The average boy gets to detest the Bible at school or college, as its historical side only is thrust upon him."

What is needed in our whole contemporary use of the accredited body of Christian fact is some more vital theory of the value and use of history than that which has been in vogue among the idolaters of fact. We need the prophetic impatience which always struggles to get away from "The preposterous Then and There" to the "Everlasting Here and Now." The most significant facts in our whole religious catena, the facts about Jesus, are impotent, as we have seen, without the subjective contribution made by the interpreter. For these facts about Jesus are spiritually impotent and must remain so, if they are preached and taught merely as events which happened two thousand years ago. Canon Barnett trying to bring the gospel of Jesus to East London had only one conviction, "Christ is a present Christ, and all of us are his contemporaries."

This doctrine of the contemporaneity of Christ has too often been looked upon in our time as a dubious mood of mystical piety which cannot be subjected to any serious critical examination. But in reality, this characteristic doctrine of the Christian religion that Christ is always present with the disciple, is founded upon the only theory of history which really has any permanent worth. It is the theory which Emerson has indicated and roughed out in his "Essay on History." Every man, Emerson tells us, must realize that he can live all history in his own person. History is significant not because it is the story of what happened far away and long ago to men whose names have resounded far, but because it is the story of what is happening to us here and now. A man must realize that he lives through the great epochs and civilizations of the past in his own life, that just as the human being in the nine months' darkness of the womb is said to review and

reincarnate the whole process of physical evolution, so the wakened human mind and heart relive the past in present conscious experience. The past becomes luminous and vital when it is a commentary upon the present. A man should realize that there is no such thing as history, there is only biography, autobiography. There is a certain touch of arrogance in the Emersonian attitude, which more timid natures do not understand. The iron string of Self-Reliance is set vibrating by every great historic fact. But, nevertheless, the secret of a true reading of history lies with this fearless autobiographical temper. "Life, evermore Life, is the imperial theme for those who live."

The academic mind takes us out onto the high places of historical vision and shows us its Valley of Dead Facts—"And lo, they are very many and they are very dry!" Nothing short of the prophetic touch of an autobiographical interpretation can clothe them with flesh and breathe into them the breath of life and meaning. The touchstone of all historical values is to be found in this method and this method alone.

Critics of Wordsworth have observed that the so-called pantheism of the poet is not really a recognition of God in nature but the discovery of self in nature. It is Wordsworth's "homing instinct" in the presence of nature which gives to his poetry its perennial power. So it is with history live as against history dead. What gives to history its vitality is the fearless homing instinct of the mind which does not hesitate to identify the past fact with the present experience.

There is a half-whimsical, half-serious passage in one of Mark Rutherford's novels in which he presses this method to its limit. He is writing of a little town in the English Midlands—"Cowfold"—and of this town he says:

"The Garden of Eden, the murder of Cain, the deluge, the salvation of Noah, the exodus from Egypt, David and Bathsheba, with the murder of Uriah, the Assyrian invasion, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection from the dead; to say nothing of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, the tragedy of Count Cenci, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the Inquisition in Spain, and the revolt of the Netherlands, all happened in Cowfold, as well as elsewhere, and were perhaps more interesting

there because they could be studied in detail and the records were authentic."

It is only when the student of history has achieved the moral courage to prophesy in his own name over the Valley of Dry Bones which makes up the severely scientific presentation of historical fact that he stands in the right relation to those facts. He may hesitate to overwork the hard driven dictum that history repeats itself, but he will not fail to sense the eternal life of every fact which is worth remembering an hour after it has been noted.

No false modesty, no self-disparagement, can blind us to the truth that what gives the great man and the great fact power over us is their strange gift to us of a better self-knowledge. The would-be great man impresses us with his own claim to greatness. The truly great man makes us feel our greatness. No historical character or event, no classic in literature, can escape this drastic autobiographical test to which subsequent generations subject them. If they are to live potently in memory, they live not because they illuminate remote times and places, but because they irradiate the life of the present. We sense

> An influence from the earth from those dead hearts
> So passionate once, so deep, so truly kind,
> That in the living child the spirit starts,
> Feeling companioned still, not left behind.

And it is the measure of companionship which may be drawn direct from past events that determines the true worth and permanence of any historical happening or any human classic.

Out of the welter of the memories of the War, two impressions still linger as illustrations of the autobiographical test which alone proves the permanent worth of the classic event and the classic record from the remote past. One memory is that of a presentation of Euripides' "Trojan Women." The play was written in 415 B. C. as a criticism of the military policy of Athens and as a human commentary upon all wars. It uses the mythical story of Troy as its text. But as retold in our own time, set to the background of the recent years, all sense of the intervening centuries was lost, and the play became modern in the only way that any classic can be called modern, through a certain eternal fidelity to unchanging human experience, which time does not give and which time,

therefore, cannot take away. Helen of Troy lived again as the perennial seduction of the pride of life and the lust of the eye. Hecuba was simply the unchanging lament of womanhood in all wars—"behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." The boy Astyanax laid at the last dead upon Hector's great shield was the childhood of all time immolated upon the altar of all wars. There was no sense of historical discrepancy in the poignant cry of old, the voice of Belgium and Flanders and Armenia speaking for the moment in the thin guise of Troy.

> Lo, I have seen the open hand of God;
> And in it nothing, nothing save the rod
> Of mine affliction.

So long as there shall be wars and rumors of war upon the earth, the marching centuries which separate us farther and farther from Euripides will never make his imperious tragedy archaic and remote. He will be at all such times the very present and sufficient voice of suffering womanhood and outraged childhood, the rebel protest of all realism. Until swords have been beaten irrevocably into ploughshares, "The Trojan Women" stands entirely outside the time process.

And the other memory is that of a symphony concert with Paderewski as the assisting artist. With the orchestra he played some long concerto, played it with matchless precision and technique but without any suggestion of human feeling. The audience would not let him go but called him back once more. Again he played, this time alone at the piano, some passionless little invention, given with adroitness but patently without heart. The audience began to break up and drift out of the hall. The orchestra members left the stage. But still a handful lingered, hoping that the man might break through the armor of self-defense which the artist had put on. Once more he came back, sat down at the piano, brooded over the keys in wandering chords of indecision, then straightened up and brought down both hands onto the keyboard in the tremendous opening chords of a Chopin Military Polonaise. All sense of time and place were lost, all sense of where one was and what was happening. And through the music of a century gone, once more come into its own in history and at the hand of a master, Chopin sang to us in the thunder and la-

ment of his measures the tragedy of Poland. For the first citizen of modern Poland at the piano, for those whom he welcomed into his self-consciousness, there was nothing but imperious autobiography—the heroic measures of yesterday living in an Eternal Here and Now. It was the voice of life itself, the epic of humanity, the minor measures of "the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world" and the major affirmation of "man's unconquerable mind."

From this ultimate autobiographical test no remote fact, no ancient classic, can permanently escape. Every record of the past, every voice of yesterday, must finally submit to this drastic proving at the touchstone of the living spirit. The ancient fact, the alien classic, which fail to serve as the voice of the present, pass away into the Nirvana of all forgotten things. But the character, the episode, the lyric, the drama, which still help men to understand themselves and which say for men in noble measures what by themselves they are not able to say, live on imperiously by virtue of their own inherent immortal life.

This is the subjective test carried to its last logical conclusion. The process which we have seen at work in the interpretation of the historical Jesus is the process by which all historical fact, all letters and all art are finally accredited or discredited. History is simply the approved body of permanent autobiography in the experience of our total humanity. All else is pedantry, archaeology, a worship of the dinosaur and the dodo.

Those Concord philosophers pressed the premises of their view of life to quixotic extreme. They caricatured themselves. But they stood free of the obsession of dead fact, and prophesied over the dry bones with a fearless self-confidence which contemporary Christianity would do well to covet. In his memoir of Thoreau, Emerson says that the distinctive quality of Thoreau's mind was his persistent habit of referring all facts in history and all items in nature to the latitude and longitude of Concord. Thoreau, asked whether he had traveled, replied, Yes, that he had traveled widely in Concord. Invited to go to the Yosemite Valley with friends, he declined on the ground that what might be seen in California could be seen as well in Concord, that many a weed in Massachusetts meant more to him than the big trees of the Pacific Coast. Urged to take an Atlantic voyage, he refused, since

the ocean was to him only a big Walden Pond. Reading Kane's "Arctic Explorations," he put the volume by with the observation that most of the phenomena which Kane had noted in the Arctic Circle he himself had seen in Concord. In refusing a suggested trip to Paris, he said that there was no use in going to France, since Paris would be only a stepping stone to Concord, a school in which to learn to live better at home.

> My feet forever stand
> On Concord fields,
> And I must live the life
> Which her soil yields.

All this is very far apart from the dominant temper of the historical method in religion as we know it to-day. But if our compendium of fact is ever to be resurrected into any immediate worth and vitality it will be through the candid application of this fearless and utterly contemporaneous temper.

The only man who reads his Bible aright is the man who dares to read it as autobiography. From cover to cover it is to him either a symbol of his own experience, or it is nothing at all other than a remote chronicle of negligible fact. Until a man understands that he must live the whole Bible in his own person, it is a closed book to him. But so read, it becomes to him the classic statement of his own spiritual development. He begins in Eden with his own age of innocence and passes on to his personal discerning between good and evil. With that discovery there is for him forever a flaming sword before the lost innocence of infancy. The Call of Abraham is the story of his own soul's awakening in youth. The time of the Judges is the lawlessness of those early years when he does what is right in his own eyes. The Kingdom is his age of imitation, of protective spiritual coloration. With the prophets he achieves his moral liberty and with the Psalmists and Wisdom writers passes into the reflective life. In Job and Ecclesiastes he first feels and grapples with the somber mystery of things. With the Gospels comes his second birth into religious reality. The Acts and the Epistles mark his effort to apply the convictions of his religious rebirth to the common task. And with the Revelation he enters into the last wisdom of all religious spirits—the vision of that ultimate Reality beyond the flaming

walls of the world where all his imperfect aspirations are to be made good in God.

Fearlessly to subject the central figure of Christian history, the figure of Jesus, to this autobiographical rereading, may savor both of arbitrary egoism and moral arrogance. But whatever the moral perils of this process, they are inevitable in the life of free and active faith, and they are less than the peril which lies in "archaeological Christianity." If Jesus is not our contemporary in some profoundly historical sense of the word, then he is nothing to us, and he can save neither himself nor us.

It is precisely because the intuitions of simple Christian piety as to the presence of the living Christ in the soul rest upon the solid foundations of a true theory of history and of the great classics, that piety has so often been religiously right where pedantry has been religiously wrong. Why is it that Shakespeare lives and must live? Not because a conspiracy of the professors has been formed to foist his plays off as a dull discipline upon successive generations. Matthew Arnold knew why Shakespeare lives, his dramas are the perennial autobiography of the race:

> All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
> All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
> Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

As Matthew Arnold found himself in Shakespeare, so the humble disciple sings of Jesus in the same strain:

> Crown him the Son of Man,
> Who every grief hath known
> That wrings the human breast,
> And takes and bears them for his own,
> That all in him may rest.

The strongest motive which man can bring to bear upon man in the things of the spirit is the exercise of sympathy. We draw much of our power for living from the sense of things shared fully and directly with our human kind. Here is the secret of the power of Jesus over the marching generations:

> O Saviour Christ, Thou too art man,
> Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried,
> Thy kind but searching glance can scan
> The very wounds that shame would hide.

To enter into the long, rich heritage of Christian history, to appropriate the power that lies undiminished in the central figure of that history, what is this but to dare to read the whole record as our own spiritual autobiography? Only the courage of this high freedom in the use of history can deliver us from the idolatry of fact and make us disciples in spirit and in truth.

What is true of religious fact is equally true of religious doctrine. Our age has a cheap contempt for the great systems of Christian theology which is a sign, not of intellectual discrimination, but of fundamental skepticism as to the value of all thought. We shall do more justice to the past and more service to the future if we approach the major doctrines of the Christian religion with a deeper humility and a keener insight.

There are two axioms regarding all human thought which are reasonably reliable and upon which the whole body of Christian doctrine rests. The first is this: The human mind does not occupy itself for any length of time with unreality. No matter how grotesque and incredible any single dogma may be, if century after century the human mind revolves around that idea, it is a fair deduction that at the heart of the matter there must be some permanent core of human concern. And the second axiom is like unto the first: Every theological doctrine, however uncongenial to our modern mental furniture and method, has its origin in a human experience. Our relation to the dogma is only a mediate relationship, our ultimate and permanent interest is in the original exciting experience.

St. Paul tells us that he had a stake in the flesh. That means nothing to us to-day. But we may not, therefore, leap to the conclusion that because modern medicine and surgery do not recognize "stakes in the flesh" there was nothing the matter with St. Paul. It is his disease that concerns us, not his diagnosis. What we have to do is to find out whether he had ophthalmia or acute indigestion or epileptic headaches. Something was the matter with St. Paul's moral nature as well. He said that he had been infected by Adam. Modern ethics does not recognize Adam as a carrier of moral diseases. But this does not mean that St. Paul was a religious valetudinarian imagining a sick conscience and a spiritual impotence which did not exist. What we wish to know to-day is this, What was the matter with the man? Where did he contract

his ill? If not from Adam, then possibly from the saber-toothed tiger. Do men have the same moral ills to-day? And, if so, how do they describe them and what can be done to cure them? St. Paul was cured of his spiritual disease on the road to Damascus. The record is filled as a matter of literal account with certain difficulties which inhere in the theory of the supernatural. But those who question the supernatural intervention must still interpret the fact. It will not do to discount the whole narrative as the exaggerated record of a slight sunstroke. The human conscience is not set at ease by sunstrokes, churches are not founded and continents evangelized by sunstrokes. If we abandon the whole Pauline interpretation of experience, we may not, therefore, deny the experience, but must seek its meanings and explanations in the terms of our own thought and understanding of life.

Two of the major doctrines of the Christian religion, for example, never perfectly reconciled, are the doctrines of Election and Free Will. They are

> The yea-nay of free will and fate,
> Whereof both cannot be, yet are.

Judged merely as dogmas each is arbitrary and both are mutually irreconcilable. But read as the interpretation of experience each is credible and both together adequate accounts of life. These two doctrines never faced one another more frankly and fully than in the Pelagian controversy. As a matter of the history of dogma that controversy belongs to old, forgotten things. But as a matter of permanent human experience this fifth century argument is simply an item in the life of the twentieth century. To Augustine, hounded by his own conscience from teacher to teacher, driven at last to Milan, to Ambrose, and finally to a child's voice heard over a garden wall, "*Tolle, lege; tolle, lege,*" the doctrine of the Irresistible Grace of God, of the Divine Election, seemed the only true account of his passage through the time of storm and stress into the peace of God. But to Pelagius, whose character was the product of patient and unremitted moral watchfulness, who had slowly built up the fabric of a Christian life by his own effort, the doctrine of free will seemed the only true account of the way men come to God. Each or both of these doctrines may be inadequate and incredible, but the experience of Augustine and

Pelagius alike are both part of the common spiritual history of good men.

The day is passed when "orthodoxy" is a hall-mark of religious excellence. Orthodoxy, as Phillips Brooks used to remind candidates for ordination, has served a moderately useful function at certain times of spiritual slack water in Christian history.

"It has no doubt served to carry the Church over, as it were, some of those periods of depressed and weakened vitality which come between the exalted and spontaneous conditions which are its true life. The same service, perhaps, it renders also to the personal experience, bridging the sad chasms between the rock of belief on this side and the rock of belief on that side with the wooden structure of conformity. But the indictment which can be sustained against it is tremendous. . . . Orthodoxy deals in coarse averages. It makes of the world of truth a sort of dollar-store, wherein a few things are rated below their real value for the sake of making a host of other things pass for more than they are worth. . . . It makes possible an easy transmission of truth but only by the deadening of truth, as a butcher freezes meat in order to carry it across the sea."

The case against wooden orthodoxy of doctrine has been so fully established that it needs no further prosecution. The time is coming, however, when we may well afford to realize that although there cannot be any permanent orthodoxy in doctrine, since the intellectual forms and fashions in which life expresses itself are always in process of change, there is, however, a permanent orthodoxy of religious experience.

It is this orthodoxy of experience, and not of dogma, which a true interest in Christian doctrine always seeks. The paradox of all heretics and all heresies lies in the fact that they dissent from the letter of the dogma only to rediscover the orthodox experience. Chesterton's insistence that the heretic is really the most orthodox man of his time could be made good again and again in Christian history. The Christian Church can afford to be very tolerant of her heretics, because they are the true mediators in history of the only orthodoxy which is worth preserving and reverencing, that of life itself. The Vincentian canon, *"Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,"* is meaningless as a theological dictum. But it

is profoundly true as a definition of the major facts of religious experience.

A great Protestant theologian of our own time has confessed that "When a man grows older and sees more deeply into life, he does not find if he possesses any inner world at all that he is advanced by the external march of things, by 'the progress of civilization.' Nay, rather he feels himself, where he was before, and forced to seek the sources of strength which his forefathers sought." That is a confession of orthodoxy in experience made by one who is a radical in theology. Yet he rests the case for doctrine where alone it can be permanently rested, on the community of experience, rather than on the diversity of explanation.

There never has been, there is not now, for example, any entirely adequate doctrine of the atonement. The elder doctrines of the atonement offend the moral sense of to-day. The latter doctrines seem wanting in an appreciation of the mystery of Calvary. Yet, as Royce reminds us, the doctrine of the atonement rests upon a moral experience so deep and so universal that, even had Jesus never lived and died, the mind of man would have had to fashion some doctrine of atonement to account for life. For beneath and beyond all inadequate dogmas of the cross lies the simple fact of life, that good men again and again suffer because of bad men, and that in the spectacle of this suffering there lies an almost unequaled moral energy.

In earth or heaven,
  Bold sailor on the sea,
What have I given
  That you should die for me?

What can I give,
  O soldier leal and brave,
Long as I live
  To pay the life you gave?

What tithe or part
  Can I return to thee,
O stricken heart,
  That thou shouldest break for me?

The wind of death
  For you hath slain life's flowers.
It withereth (God grant)
  All weeds in ours.

That is the great community of experience which lies behind all doctrines of atonement. No doctrine can ever give an adequate account of the central moral mystery. There can be no permanent orthodoxy of explanation. Every dogma is at best a broken light which serves its own time inadequately, then gutters and goes out. But of the living comradeship of the centuries in the presence of the Calvary-like experience there is no doubt. The ancient doctrines may all be alien to our thought, but the old experience must always be a part of our spiritual autobiography.

Every doctrine, then, is but a schoolmaster to lead us to the relatively permanent content of common religious experience, its few central emotions and convictions, actions and reactions. In theology a man in our own time may be a heretic without peril to his soul, but if he be a profoundly religious man he will become more and more conscious of the orthodoxy of life itself and of his own experience where it is hid in the common heart of man and hid in the unchanging Reality that is the heart of God.

CHAPTER IV.

A Modern Doctrine of Original Sin.

"AS I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Den, and I laid me down in *that* place to sleep. And as I slept, I dreamed a Dream. I dreamed and behold *I saw a Man cloathed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great Burden upon his back.* I looked and saw him open the Book and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to continue, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, *What shall I do. . . . I am undone by reason of a Burden that lieth hard upon me. . . . I care not what I meet if so be I can also meet deliverance from this Burden.*"

There is no point at which modern liberal Protestantism stands in sharper contrast to historic Christianity as a whole than in its indifference to this initial mood of Christian experience. It does not matter where we turn, in what past century or to what type of record, the Christian life uniformly began, in the generations gone, as an effort to roll away the heavy burden of sin and guilt from the bowed shoulders of the human conscience.

The preaching ministry of Jesus opened with an unqualified command to repent. Jesus did not seek to create the sense of sin or even to explain it, he presupposed it. Christianity came to Paul as a great deliverance from the moral horror of a body of spiritual death to which he had been chained. It released him from his ghastly comradeship with ethical corruption. The classical world into which Christianity entered and in which its early conquests were made, was bowed down by the sense of sin. Neoplatonism and the mystery religions, the only significant extra-Christian movements of the first three centuries of our era, both appealed to the troubled conscience of paganism. Christianity competed with

them and prevailed because it proffered a sounder healing for the hurt at the heart of the ancient world.

The mystics, of whom Saint Martin says, "They all come from the same country and speak the same language," are at one in their account of the rungs in the ladder of perfection. The first of these steps, following hard after the moment of the soul's conscious awakening, is that of purgation, self-discipline, the effort of the ardent conscience to roll from off its shoulders its heavy and weary weight of guilt.

For eighteen hundred years the dominant theology of all creeds and churches had, as its point of departure, its sting "that bids nor sit nor stand but go," this universal consciousness of inherent and original sin. However Paul, Augustine, Calvin and Edwards may have differed in theological detail they are all agreed in appealing primarily to the *malaise* of the human conscience. The comparative study of all religions, indeed, bears out William James's familiar statement that "The completest religions seem to be those in which the pessimistic elements are best developed. Buddhism, of course, and Christianity are the best known to us of these. They are essentially religions of deliverance." Tyrrell puts it in another way when he says that the Christian view of the world is an ultimate optimism, but that this optimism rests on a provisional pessimism. A religion which makes its initial appeal to the consciousness of original goodness, to moral self-complacency, would not have been recognized before 1850 as the Christian religion.

"The modern man," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "is not bothering about his sins. If he is good for anything he is up and doing." The conceiver of that premature birth which was known as the "New Theology" began his Pilgrim's Progress with a very different statement from that of John Bunyan's. He tells us that, although the average Christian still kneels in church and confesses Sunday by Sunday that he is a miserable sinner, he really does not mean it. If someone were to stop him on the street Monday morning and charge him with actually being a miserable sinner, he certainly would be very angry, would demand that the libelous critic specify in detail and then would probably institute legal proceedings for defamation of character!

So utterly has this whole dogma dropped below the religious

horizon of the normal man of to-day that he simply has no idea of what historic Christianity meant by its doctrine of total depravity. It is told of a certain dour Scotch chaplain who was still under the spell of the somber tenets of Calvinism, that one day, preaching to his boys in France, he fell under heavy conviction of sin and said that he knew he was the wickedest and most sinful man in France at that moment. The healthy young barbarians heard this statement with a bewildered deference, and finally the awkward silence at the close of the service was broken by a breezy young officer who stepped up and said, "Well, Sir, you must get a tremendous lot of satisfaction out of remembering what a perfectly ripping time you've had." So little does the youth of our day begin to appreciate the tears for sin with which the fathers prevented the night watches.

"This, then," says Johnston Ross, taking up the tale, "is the quintessence of the Christianity of the hour—helpfulness. In the dim backgrounds of a history semi-legendary, semi-mythological lies the Titanic struggle of the Son of God with Sin and Death in the agonies of Calvary, flung back there as we fling the legends of Arthur and Beowulf and Siegfried. The older generation began at a point of grave concern as to personal status before a holy God. It wrestled with the awful facts of guilt and of the ineradicable consequences of sin. I remember that I once had the honor of preaching for a minister of the older generation. I found him preparing an address for the General Assembly. He said to me, 'I am writing about the evangelical outlook. We older men knew what Christ did for us on Calvary; but precisely what does this beautiful young Apollo whom your younger men adore do for you?'"

Nothing is clearer, to-day, than the indifference of the crowd to the traditional message of the Christian religion, or at least to the conventional terms in which that message has for centuries been cast. The Church must accept her full and fair burden of the responsibility for this growing misunderstanding, this lack of a common ground of speech in the vernacular of the pulpit and the vernacular of the street. But the problem is something more than a mere lack of mutual understanding of vernaculars. The ground of the apparent impotence of the Christian religion in modern society is found, in part at least, in the fact that from the first

our religion has addressed itself primarily to the sense of human sin and the burden of moral guilt. Most of the deeper stuff of our spiritual heritage is concerned with the healing of the ills of the human conscience. But young Apollos have no hurt of conscience, and in a time which thinks well of itself morally, the offices of Christianity seem superfluous and its central doctrine of salvation gratuitous.

There is in one of our American seaboard cities a long established philanthropy founded years ago to provide a decent shore home for deep-sea sailors. In the days of the clipper ships the life of a man before the mast yielded much hardship and few compensations. A half century ago this sailors' home hard by the wharves kept open house for the seaman in port. The pittance which he brought ashore as wages gave him there a decent home, good food and a friendly environment. The clipper ships are gone. The deck hands on the steamers which now dock where the clippers used to lie are paid a hundred dollars a month at sea, with all found, and a shore allowance of three dollars a day while in port. They no longer need the charitable ministries of the sailors' home. They pass by its doors with a substantial roll of bills in their pockets, they go up town to the regular hostelries, and live as becomes men no longer dependent upon charity. Meanwhile, bound hand and foot by laws governing the use of trust funds, this sailors' home cannot alienate any of its income for the other human needs which have grown up in the city, and after all expenses have been paid, there is a margin of income from the endowments which rolls up year after year. Eventually some radical readjustment to the contemporary fact will be necessary. The society will have to seek relief from the legislature that it may be free to divert these funds into lines of fresh service not anticipated by the founders. Otherwise its present sponsors will have hard work getting their ample camel of a charity into the heaven of ultimate self-respect through the eye of the moral needle. For one cannot minister to needs which have ceased to exist.

Now contemporary Christianity is in something of the same dilemma. Its sacred trust was at the first established and was subsequently endowed in history by the labors of many devoted souls, to heal the hurt of the moral nature. But in a time when

there is little or no felt hurt in the conscience of Christendom it is a perfectly fair question what the office of the Christian religion really is. Höffding laments that whereas formerly religion was the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night which marched in the vanguard of history, now it is only an ambulance corps trailing along in the rear of the conflict caring for the sick and wounded. But even this caring for the wounded has ceased to be a moral ministry. It is divided, at the best, between proffering some solace to the bereaved, a solace which the Psychical Research Society threatens to monopolize, and doing "friendly visiting" for the Associated Charities, too often a mistaken mixture of patronage and curiosity. As for healing the moral hurt of those whose conscience has been sorely wounded in the conflict of life, that particular type of wound is the exception.

We talk of "sin," that ancient obsession of the fathers, and "men smile and pass by." There is, patently, some fundamental maladaptation to environment in the whole situation. Whether the spiritual fault be that of the religion or the environment is one of the moot moral problems of the day. It simply does no good to work oneself into a kind of dervish fervor of evangelical piety by preaching about the exceeding sinfulness of sin, or to print the word with a capital "S." These are the poor resorts of a religion which is confessedly at its wits' ends to find something to do in the world. They are a confession that evangelical piety despairs of making itself understood in any rational way and has to resort to the effects of theological incantation. All this is merely seeking refuge in those vain repetitions against which the Master warned us. The conventional revival meeting method of preaching sin is about as effective with the modern mind as the idle revolutions of a Thibetan prayer wheel. The trombone if played long enough and loud enough may produce, by a kind of autosuggestion or through a semi-hypnotic condition, a temporary sense of sin. But the emotion does not last beyond the doors of the overheated tabernacle, and it represents no permanent ethical reality in the normal mind of the man of to-day. Proffering thus, the traditional gospel of a glorious salvation from sin is a kind of casting the pearls of our hereditary faith before men who so far from conceiving of themselves as immoral swine, habitually think of them-

selves as moral rajahs whose casket of virtues is so full that it has no need of any pearl of great price more.

In short, the whole furniture of the Pauline doctrine of human sinfulness no longer makes any appeal to the modern mind. It is simply dead and gone, in its traditional form; of interest to the antiquarian, but without any point of vital contact with the moral consciousness of the present hour. To say "In Adam's fall we sinned all" is to say nothing to this generation. The modern man feels that Adam has been a badly overworked character in human history and that he deserves now some eternal Sabbath of respite from the obloquy which our thankless predecessors cast on him. We think better of him than they thought, and as for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—the sin in Eden that they did by two and two they must long since have paid for one by one. It was, of course, the advent of the modern sciences which issued Adam his indeterminate ticket of moral leave in history and wrecked the whole grim system which had been built up around him. He remained a person to conjure with ethically until he was confronted by Darwin, Lyell, Spencer and Co. Since then he has been superseded by a half-erect biped with a sharply recessive forehead, somewhere along the line between Pithecanthropus erectus and the Neanderthal savage whose background is the nebular hypothesis and the primeval ooze; nebula, ooze and biped all alike simply nonmoral.

One cannot review, however, the unbroken history of Christian thought over eighteen centuries, and then the clean break of the nineteenth century with the fundamental conviction of the past as to man's sinful nature, without some sober second thoughts. Certainly Charles Darwin has not proved an altogether adequate successor to the great preachers of yesterday, and "The Ascent of Man" has not hastened the moral millennium appreciably. Everywhere there is to-day a willingness to review the total witness of Christian experience and to recover from the faith of the past such of its central convictions as may have been too easily and cavalierly abandoned.

If we abide by the proposition of the previous chapter that the human mind does not permanently occupy itself with unreality and that behind every doctrine, however incredible and arbitrary, there lies some actual human experience, we have ground for the

shrewd suspicion that in the old dogma of original sin there must lie some more or less permanent element of the moral life, which still persists though it is not recognized when clothed in the discarded systems of yesterday.

There is, as a matter of fact, no single article in the creeds of the elder orthodoxy which so sorely needs candid reëxamination in our own day as does this of original sin, not only that we may restore the continuity of the Christian consciousness unbroken, but that once more we may commend our religion of salvation to the deeper want of the world. What the thoughtful man seeks to-day is not to rehabilitate the letter of the system of the fathers, but to enter with a more resourceful sympathy into the experience of the fathers, to discover what the marching generations still share in the common moral consciousness of the race.

When we turn back to the tradition of the elders regarding original sin, what strikes us at once is the fact that sin was not with them a synonym for vice. It is just this modern reduction of the idea of original sin to occasional vice which has created for us our initial misunderstandings. The modern church member is probably not a man of gross viciousness, but neither was Paul such a man, nor Augustine, nor Calvin. Whatever the thing may have been, it was not the sort of transgression which is confessed by the sower of wild oats at a Salvation Army mourners' bench.

Santayana says that Calvinism was essentially an expression of the agonized conscience. That is the simplest and best working definition of the whole system which could be fashioned. But the longer one ponders this agonized conscience the clearer it is that its suffering was not a mere superficial irritation. Just before he died, Robert Hugh Benson said that he felt ill, "not at the top, but deep down from the inside." The conscience of the Calvinist ailed in the same way, deep down inside. His constant burden was not a mere cumulation of peccadilloes. It was not that he went to sleep in the Lord's house on Sunday and had to be prodded into reverential wakefulness by the tithing man, or that he lost his temper on Monday, or drank one too many mugs of mead on Tuesday, or cut too sharp a corner on Wednesday's horse trade.

These items were deplorable enough in their own way. But they were of moral significance only because they were the outcroppings of a constant liability which, weeded out at one spot in character,

reappeared in another. They were like those masses of pusley which Charles Dudley Warner describes so feelingly in his "Summer in a Garden." The whole subsoil of that garden was nothing but a tangled mesh of roots of witch grass. So, for the Calvinist, the whole subsoil of character was matted through and through by the weedy mesh of moral liability. To dig it up seemed a hopeless task. If you cleared character at any one spot, sin only got ahead of you somewhere else.

This thing that he called original sin seemed to be constantly vitiating his whole personal struggle after virtue. His moral problem was not to keep his petty cash account with God balanced week by week. What haunted his soul was the knowledge that there was a mortgage on the whole business, and that if the moral order suddenly foreclosed, as it might at any moment, he would be found bankrupt, his few private profits on the moral venture counting for nothing against his heavy outstanding human liabilities.

So, in his famous Enfield sermon, Jonathan Edwards says that every little child born into the world is more hateful to God than the loathliest viper that crawls on the ground. But, as Leslie Stephen shrewdly remarks, Jonathan Edwards seems, nevertheless, "to have had a very happy time of it amid a brood of eleven little vipers of his own begetting!" That comment lights up the otherwise baffling paradox which runs through all Calvinism that the better a man is the more sinful he seems to himself to be. We must conclude that the viperish quality of the Edwards brood was not an induction from the facts of the Edwards home reached in a bilious moment of parental petulance, but an *a priori* judgment passed on all childhood, on which Edwards based his survey of human nature as a whole. What vexed the soul of Jonathan Edwards was not that the Edwards children were mischievous and irritating beyond the common kind, but that simply by being born into the world at all every one of us has to accept certain inevitable and inalienable moral liabilities as part of his birthright.

The problem which faces the modern preacher who still has a message of salvation and redemption to preach to the world is to find the equivalent forms of the agonized conscience of Calvinism in the thought of our own time. Once we define the doctrine

of original sin as an early and inadequate effort to express the sense of personal participation in the corporate moral liabilities of humanity as a whole, we begin to see our way ahead. We may candidly leave the items of private vice and virtue to one side altogether. They have nothing to do with the major problem, save as they are interesting casual manifestations of the moral situation as a whole.

The true successors to the Calvinist with his agonized conscience and his initial dogma of original sin are to be found to-day among the biologists, the psychologists, the novelists and the dramatists. It is very seldom that one hears in the modern pulpit any note approximating to that of the elder theology voicing its burden of human guilt. But one does not have to seek far in these other quarters before one realizes that one is still in the presence of the agonized human conscience and that although it now speaks a new dialect, its central consciousness is qualitatively unchanged.

Perhaps the most important and epoch-making utterance in the realm of biological science since Darwin's "Origin of Species" was Huxley's Romanes Lecture on "Evolution and Ethics," given at Oxford in 1893. That is a full generation ago. But Huxley, as he well enough knew, in delivering that address, was before his time and he raised then what has since become the really important problem in connection with the whole biological reading of man's life in nature and society.

In that address Huxley turned state's evidence against the whole overhopeful ethical deductions drawn by Spencer and John Fiske and Henry Drummond from the theory of natural selection. Huxley came in that maturest moment of his thinking to the conclusion that the struggle for existence was immoral, or at the best nonmoral in its methods. His argument need not be reproduced in detail. Suffice to say that he took his stand as an ethical teacher against all the neopaganism of our day which would seek salvation by abandoning ourselves to the instincts which drive the cosmic process. The ape and the tiger served their part in the hot youth of the race. They have ceased to be an asset and have now become a liability. "The practice of what is ethically best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to

success in the cosmic struggle. It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence. Let us understand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic struggle, still less in running away from it, but in combating it."

The significance of the Romanes Lecture for the religious thinker lies in the fact that it aligned Huxley with Calvinism, and that he knew it and was content to stand there. He himself caricatured his own lecture as "a very orthodox sermon on 'Satan the Prince of this World.' " In other words, he felt that the science of biology had revealed in some new and terrible way the moral liability of every child of man, a liability reaching back of the mythical Garden of Eden to the jungle where the saber-toothed tiger roamed at large, and where red ravin went its lawless way. And he felt the stirrings of the tiger in his own blood to be more real and ominous than any spell cast by Adam over the race.

"It is," he writes to a friend, "the superiority of the best theological teachers to the majority of their opponents that they substantially recognize the reality of things, however strange the forms in which they clothe their conceptions. The doctrines of predestination, original sin, of the innate depravity of man and the evil fate of the greater part of the race, of the primacy of Satan in this world, of the essential vileness of matter, appear to me vastly nearer the truth than the liberal popular illusion that babies are all born good, that it is given to everybody to realize his ethical ideal if he will only try, that all partial evil is universal good and other optimistic figments which bid us believe that everything will come right at the last." Huxley's moral consciousness, as a biologist, was agonized, and his initial outlook on life was a provisional pessimism. He stands in the straight line of ethical succession from Edwards, Calvin, Augustine and Paul. He proffers no facile gospel of social salvation—he did not conceive that to be his task. His task was rather to find the facts and make men face the facts, and these facts he held to be such as compel in some form or other a doctrine of original sin. With the moral problem which he stated, modern science is still wrestling. But there is little or no tendency among sober scientists to-day to question the ethical presupposition which Huxley laid down.

Mr. Wells has more than once popularized the Romanes Lecture in his novels and semi-theological tracts. And he tells us quite

candidly that this life force in the struggle for existence may not be deified—that it is in substance a sinister and ominous thing. "The forms in which this being clothes itself bear thorns and fangs and claws, are soaked with poison and bright with threats or allurements, prey slyly or openly on one another, hold their own for a little while, breed savagely and resentfully, and pass. . . ." So far have we come from John Fiske. And this advance of modern thought is nothing but a circling back to the old haunting obsession of a fundamental human liability, a burden of corporate racial guilt. Huxley and Wells and all such preach this old somber gospel of man's sinful nature with a conviction and terrible earnestness unsurpassed by any of the fathers. The language they use is the language of our own time, but their central message to our time is that of the elders to the earlier time, man is by nature a sinner and needs salvation.

The modern psychologist in his study of human instincts is also reverting to Calvinism. The best that he can say for our instincts is that they are the nonmoral sources of power in human nature. Of themselves they are no more good or bad than any other form of energy. Left to themselves uncontrolled and uncoördinated, they set up a civil warfare in our natures, disrupting and destroying the house of flesh and spirit they ought to energize. There is always potential moral evil in instincts not wrought into some central harmony by a good will. And it needs but a little remitting of the strong hand of the will to make this potential moral evil a present actuality.

One of our own American philosophers has just written of "Human Nature and Its Remaking." The very title implies an initial unfavorable verdict upon human nature in the raw. For there is no moral necessity to remake that which is inherently and inevitably good in itself. Every idealism, says the writer, has its origin in some deprecatory judgment upon the primitive human stuff out of which character is to be fashioned. There is no escape for any idealist from his initial dictum that there is in this welter of human instinct some maladjustment, some chaos that needs saving and solving. The names which we give to the facts and to the remaking process he regards as irrelevant. But he insists that upon the facts themselves we shall agree. He will not suffer us to put away the doctrine of original sin as a childish theological

nightmare. He even doubts whether this somber judgment upon the nature of man is primarily a product of theological speculation. He shrewdly suspects it to be an inevitable deduction from the life of humanity as a whole and insists that it has "a strong support in common experience." The modern psychologist is essentially a Calvinist when he surveys the chaos of human instinct.

But there marches beside this modern biological and psychological restatement of the doctrine of original sin a further expression of this same conviction which makes an even more direct and deeper appeal to the mind of to-day. That is the conception of man, not so much a sinner in nature, as a sinner through society. It is through the voice of the social conscience that Calvinism finds its most adequate expression in this present time.

The social conscience is by no means a discovery of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is a fair question whether it has ever been absent from simple Christian piety at its best. The rank individualism of the Anglo-Saxon temperament, and of the ultra-Protestant attitude suppressed it for generations in our English-speaking world. But exact and entirely adequate statements of its central position can be found all through Christian history. "Piers Plowman" is nothing but a tract on the social conscience, written, indeed, over six hundred years ago, but essentially true to the modern form. Behind the institution of voluntary poverty which inspired most of the lay brotherhood movements of the two centuries before the Reformation lay a sensitive social conscience. John Woolman's "Journal" is nothing but a study in the agonized conscience of a single sensitive individual following the social implications of his life to their sources and their consequences. The thing is not new.

But the social conscience has come into a prominence in our own time never so widely and deeply felt before, and its importance for theology lies in the fact that it must now do major duty as the vehicle for that strange sense of original sin which men seem always to have felt in some form or other. What did the fathers mean, at bottom, by their doctrine of original sin? Let Mr. Wells answer in the person of Mr. Britling, who, learning to drive his new automobile, had all but killed a hapless cyclist, and thus soliloquizes:

"This last folly was surely the worst. To charge through this patient world with—how much did the car weigh? A ton certainly and perhaps more—reckless of every risk. Not only to himself but to others. Once more he saw the bent back of the endangered cyclist, and then through a long instant he drove helplessly at the wall. . . .

Hell perhaps is only one such incident, indefinitely prolonged. . . . Anything might have been there in front of him.

'Good God!' he cried, 'if I had hit a child! I might have hit a child.' . . .

But this was not fair! He had hurt no child! . . .

It wasn't his merit that the child hadn't been there.

The child might have been there!

Mere luck.

If he had not crushed a child other people had. Such things happened. Vicariously at any rate he had crushed many children. . . .

Why are children ever crushed?

And suddenly all the pain and destruction and remorse of all the accidents in the world descended upon Mr. Britling.

He became Man on the automobile of civilization crushing his thousands daily in his headlong yet aimless career. . . .

This was a trick of Mr. Britling's mind. It had this tendency to spread outward from himself to generalised issues. Many minds are like that nowadays. He was not so completely individualised as people are supposed to be individualised—in our law, in our stories, in our moral judgments. He had a vicarious factor. He could slip from concentrated reproaches to the liveliest remorse for himself as the Automobilist in General, or for himself as England, or for himself as Man. From remorse for smashing his guest and his automobile he could pass, by what was for him the most imperceptible of transitions, to remorse for every accident that has ever happened through the error of an automobilist since automobiles began. All that long succession of blunderers became Mr. Britling. Or rather Mr. Britling became all that vast succession of blunderers."

It would be difficult to find in modern literature, theological or otherwise, a more entirely adequate account of what the sense

of original sin actually is when stated in the terms of the moral consciousness of the twentieth century. Mr. Britling did prevent the night watches with these sober reflections. Sir Oliver Lodge to the contrary, he lay awake worrying about his Sin, not the concrete actuality, but the potentiality new with each day he took the wheel of his car, and wide as his vicarious sense of being the Automobilist-at-Large. That he missed the cyclist was a minor happy accident which in no way mitigated his daily social burden of "original sin."

If the modern novel strikes this penitential note of the agonized conscience, the modern drama strikes it even more effectively. No one who has ever read or seen Galsworthy's "Justice," for example, is left without a sense of social guilt. Josiah Royce once said that when he met a wooden mind he felt "bitterly ashamed" that he lived in a world where truth could be made so dull and uninteresting. One closes the cover or leaves the theater after the last act of "Justice" bitterly ashamed that one lives in a world where such cruel injustices prevail. Galsworthy is essentially a Calvinist in the stuff of his agonized social conscience, and he preaches to the present age the doctrine of corporate social sin with tremendous effectiveness.

But in many ways the most effective modern spokesman for the elder theology is George Bernard Shaw. The play-going, play-reading world is divided into three parts. One part insists upon treating Shaw as a buffoon. Another part regards him as the high priest of a new religion. While a third part is always irritated and angered by Shaw. Neither of the first two reactions are what Shaw himself seeks for his work. He wishes to be taken seriously, indeed, but not solemnly. The laugh is always there and Shaw is too adroit a humorist to wish us to miss it. But what he is really trying to do is to wound the vanity and self-complacency of our modern world.

Bishop Creighton used to say that after we have gotten rid of the ape and the tiger we shall have to dispose of the donkey, "a much more intractable animal." Shaw is willing to leave the problem of the ape and the tiger to the keepers of the ethical zoo. His mission is to run down the donkey-at-large in us all. This stupid domestic brute is quite as much a moral problem as his

companions of the jungle. Indeed, as modern society is organized, he is a good deal more of a problem.

The method in Shaw's madness always needs a little explanation. He tells us that in the old days the Court Jester enjoyed certain immunities not granted to the sober courtiers. He was the only man in the Kingdom who was allowed to talk treason and he was given this license because it would have been dangerous to admit that he was sane. The Court Jester was an invaluable institution because he was the one source of moral perspective in the kingdom who prevented His Majesty from losing his sense of proportion. He was the touch of the finiteness and pathos of all kings and kingdoms which always saved the doctrine of the divinity of kings from overstepping its limits.

Because there are some things which must be said in this world, and yet cannot be said by a sober man without charge of heresy and treason, Shaw has appointed himself Court Jester to His Majesty The Average Man in the modern world. Shaw is willing to play the mountebank, not merely because the rôle is a congenial one, but because he can say from beneath the cap and bells some things that men would not hear from any other source.

Shaw's initial attack upon our age is a wholesale condemnation of the Romantic movement, and by Romanticism he means not that movement in its purity and depth of early feeling, but in its modern and decadent forms of sentimentalism and neopaganism. He does not hesitate to identify himself with the old Puritan theology. He writes plays for Puritans and sounds a rallying call to a modern Puritanism, to a new intellectual and moral sincerity. What angers him, ethically, about modern civilization is its insincerity, its worship under the guise of romantic virtue of bestial and brutal ideals. Like Huxley he prefers the elder theology to the modern because it was more honest in facing and naming facts. He sees the innuendo of the twin-bed farce and the musical revue leading straight to Mrs. Warren's profession, and if prostitution is what the modern author and play-goer mean, he prefers that they should say so in so many words. He is essentially a spokesman for the ethical realism of the Calvinist outlook on life, as against the romantic Pharisaism of our time which would sanction its license by a cheap and easy appeal to the theory that to the pure all things are pure.

Shaw is no prude. He is not unwilling that a candid sensuality should have its Rabelaisian horse laugh. He has no moral quarrel with Falstaff or Doll Tearsheet, because they say exactly what they mean. But he will not let us deify the decadent erotic motif. Mrs. George, the Lady Mayoress of "Getting Married," is not averse to an occasional flirtation; that is the way she enlarges her knowledge of human life; but when her lover proposes to enshrine their idle liaison in the golden casket of the Paolo-Francesca, Lancelot-Guinevere tradition she will have none of it. "If I got anxious about George's health and I thought it would nourish him, I would fry you with onions for his breakfast and think nothing of it." Very few illicit romances can survive this odor for any length of time. Shaw really prefers the moral aroma of fried onions to that of attar of roses. And he would subject all modern morality to this pungent proving. The romance of war, the romance of justice, the romance of vengeance, are spots of moral horror in Shaw's world because he senses in them all fundamental insincerities which are wanting in the old Calvinist scheme of things, which for all its harshness called things by their right names. He would have us get away from the muddy self-righteousness of the sentimentalist, and go back to the sharp ethical distinctions of the realist. His initial temper is that of a hundred and fifty years ago, not of our own time, and that is why he seems such an anachronism.

When Shaw turns from the moral peril of the diffuse and decadent sentimentality of modern civilization to its specific social sins, his agonized conscience speaks even more clearly, and his burden of original sin is perfectly intelligible. Behind the buffoon there is a prophet, who in his own perverse and arbitrary way is bent upon one thing above all else, to play Nathan to King Demos. He finds always near at hand some modern Pharisee standing in self-righteous satisfaction, looking with scorn upon the sins of the patent rascals of the day, and he leaves him at the end of his drama a smitten and conscious sinner. He puts up the glaring offender for our initial condemnation, the Prussian militarist, the whiskey king, the pimp, the panderer, the owner of a rotten slum block. He proceeds, as did Nathan and Amos, to rouse our moral indignation against these outlaws, and then casting the net of dramatic action around us, he adroitly and with

inevitable logic involves us in their sins until we see ourselves as partners in one or another of these nefarious traffics. He forces us, in these plays, into the dilemma where he can wheel about upon us and say, "Thou art the man!" Again and again he wrings from the mouth of the Pharisee, venting his solemn indignation upon the patent rascal, the final surprised and utterly humiliated confession, "I am just as bad as you are."

Would you know what original sin means when felt and stated in the terms of the social conscience? Read any or all of the more serious Shaw plays.

"Widower's Houses" is the story of a self-righteous young doctor, Trench, who falls in love with the daughter of a certain wealthy Sartorius. Trench has a modest income of only seven hundred pounds a year, but Sartorius is to add a generous allowance. All goes well until Trench discovers that Sartorius is agent for some of the worst slums in London and that the money his fiancée is to bring with her is wrung from the poor of the tenements. His conscience will not let him accept such tainted money and he goes to Sartorius to state the case and to break the engagement. His prospective father-in-law listens with interest and then asks him if he knows anything about the sources of his own income. Trench replies that it is paid him as an annuity from a trust fund, but that it is perfectly clean. Sartorius punctures his self-righteousness by telling him that the whole trust fund in question is invested as a first mortgage on the slum property for which he is agent. Trench is left, at the end of the play, to grapple with the new moral problem which rises from the discovery that his own income is just as tainted as that of his beloved.

Vivie Warren, who has just graduated from Cambridge with high mathematical honors, receives a proposal of marriage from an old blackguard who turns out to be part proprietor in a chain of "high-class" brothels in the capitals of Europe. Vivie rejects the proposal with righteous indignation. Her suitor asks her how much she knows about her mother. She has to answer that she knows very little, her mother having been traveling on the continent all the while she has been in school and college. She is told to her humiliation that her mother is the other proprietor in these same brothels, and that she need not refuse in moral horror the luxuries offered her by her mother's partner, since all her oppor-

tunities for years had been given her at the price of the shame of her sorrowful sisters in society. Where, says Crofts, would your Oxfords and your Cambridges, your Girtons and Newnhams be but for the earnings of this traffic and a dozen like it? Vivie Warren is left at the last a long-time, silent partner in the most sinister traffic of the time.

Ferrovius, of "Androcles and the Lion," prospective Christian martyr in the Roman Arena, finds in the moment of his trial that his giant sword arm has not forsaken him. He forgets his non-resisting Master, and kills six gladiators before the Emperor can intervene. He discovers to his sorrow what his fellow disciple Lavinia had already told him, "You know, Ferrovius, I am not always a Christian; I do not think anybody is." When Caesar advances him on the spot to the Praetorian Guard, he answers: "In my youth I worshipped the god Mars. I turned from him to the Christian God, but to-day the Christian God forsook me and Mars overcame me to claim his own. The Christian God is not yet. He will come when Mars and I are dust; but meanwhile I will serve the gods that are, not the gods that will be. Until then, I accept service in the guard, Caesar." Shaw will not suffer any of us to seek solitary and self-righteous exemption from the total corporate guilt of wars.

Major Barbara hopes to ease her troubled conscience by leaving a home of luxury in the West End which lives by the profits of the munitions trade. She joins the Salvation Army in the East End. A bitter winter with cold and hunger falls on East London. The Army, driven to desperation, appeals for funds. It is offered five thousand pounds by Bodger, the whiskey distiller, if another five thousand can be raised. Undershaft, Barbara's father, comes forward with the second five thousand. To Barbara's sorrow and humiliation the Army has no scruples about accepting the total ten thousand from whiskey and shells. The Army apparently has no conscience, for it cannot afford a conscience. Though she fly from the West End and make her bed in the East End, Barbara's problem follows her and her guilt seeks her out. She leaves the Army in sober and bitter second thought, and takes a job in her father's plant. When the curtain falls it falls on Barbara under the shadow of the big guns, and in the midst of the moral problem of high explosives. In other words, as Shaw has it in the blunt prose

of his preface to this play, "You must either share the guilt of this world or go to another planet." The idea that there is to be found in modern society clean money as against tainted money Shaw writes down as an exploded individualist superstition. The whole body of money in circulation is sullied by its part in transactions which fall short of moral idealism. It touches the contaminated man in its circulation, it takes the germs of moral infection from the situation through which it passes, and it brings to us, no matter how it reaches us, its moral liabilities, its contagion of social injustice. Shaw's central thesis is this, there is no longer any desert to which the individual may retire, where he can cut himself loose from his part in the corporate responsibility of human society for all its patent evils and injustices. Whatever your task, wherever you stand, the roots of your life reach down so deep and out so far into society as a whole, that your life becomes hopelessly intertwined with the tangled mesh of the sins of society. The better you know yourself and your circumstances the more clearly you see yourself to be guilty of "original sin," a moral partner in all the major evils of the time.

Beyond these sins of social commission there are those sins of social omission, only half sensed, which really bulk so large in the life of comfortable and complacent men and women to-day. The burden of this form of moral failure can never be wholly absent from the sensitive conscience. Such is the sin of all those who take their ease in Zion, unmindful of the fatherless and the widow.

> At Vesper tide
> One virtuous and pure in heart did pray,
> "Since none I wronged in deed or word to-day
> From whom should I crave pardon, Master, say?"
>
> A voice replied,
> "From the sad child whose play thou hast not planned,
> The goaded heart whose friend thou didst not stand,
> The rose that died for water from thine hand."
>
> "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these
> My brethren, ye did it not unto me."

If the Christian preacher fails to discern the reappearance of the old, persistent, agonized conscience of the human race, not in the now antiquated terms of the Pauline theology, but in these

contemporary voices of modern science, fiction, drama and verse, he misses one of his signal opportunities to preach the central Christian doctrine of salvation.

The deeper ministry of the religions of salvation looks not so much to the deliverance of the individual sinner from his specific dilemmas as to the redemption of his whole human status. That is why Christianity never can subscribe to the monastic solution of the problem of evil. A religion which proffers me salvation but leaves my world unsaved can be no true religion for me to-day. I can only be saved in so far as I am saved in and with my race and age as a whole. And if it comes to the choice there are many passionately earnest men in the world to-day who would choose to go to hell with the majority rather than to heaven with the minority, simply because the sense of participation for better or for worse in the major lot of the race is our deepest source of spiritual satisfaction. In other words, the habitat of a moral minority cannot be heaven for us.

Meanwhile our religion which looks to nothing short of the redemption of the sinner's total human status in nature and in society can well afford to take up the intimations of "original sin" to be found in all these extra-ecclesiastical sources and carry them on to their fulfillment in the sincerely penitential spirit.

Shaw is a moral diagnostician, he is not a moral penitent in any characteristically religious sense of the word. It is in John Woolman, in Tolstoi, that one finds the profoundly penitential note. The Psalmist and the Hebrew prophet are needed to make spiritually urgent the facts discovered by the biologist and the dramatist.

We have invoked in the past few years the prophetic ideal of righteousness as the granite foundation of human society. We have preached the Old Testament gospel of justice because it has been so hard to preach the New Testament gospel of love. Each of us in his own way has profited by the tonic of Hebraism. What the mind of Christ may have to say to the more bloodthirsty preaching from the vast majority of Christian pulpits over these latter years only time can tell. One is reminded of Hardy's remark that a century ago the churches of England substituted hatred of Napoleon for the love of God!

But even if we rest the case for the modern church during the War and post-war troubles primarily upon the Old rather than

the New Covenant, it is still perfectly clear that we have fallen short of the total moral message of the Hebrew lawgiver and prophet. We have been willing to play Amos in our denunciation of the sins of the nations round. We have been very loath to follow Amos to an equally clear confession of our own sins. The immediate aims of the temporal kingdoms are not always best served by the penitential mood. That mood does not strengthen the hands of the men of war, or of big business, or of anarchic purpose. One still looks in vain, as one has looked through all these recent years, for any appreciable spirit of repentance. There has been international recrimination without stint, there has been mutual criticism between the classes. The truculent and abusive voice has gained its followers by the thousands while the profoundly prophetic summons to repentance has gathered only its handful. After all, Huxley, Tolstoi, Galsworthy, Shaw, are at the best voices crying in a moral wilderness. And though an increasing number of men admit the truth of their ethical indictment of the status of the average man, our age is still too inert and comfortable to let these known facts sting us into any moral action.

It is very hard to find on the present horizon any signs which indicate that the Kingdom of the Heavens is to dawn to-morrow. Once more the apocalyptic hope of the imminent Kingdom is dispelled. Again Christ's Kingdom is as a man journeying into a far country. But if this Kingdom tarries, its tarrying is somehow bound up with the untroubled self-righteousness of the crowd. The voices of the politician, the class agitator, the maker of platforms and treaties are still strident with Pharisaism. There has not been over the past six years and there is not now a single official voice in Christendom which has begun to rise to the moral level that Lincoln reached in the Second Inaugural. That address is fitly called the greatest state paper of the nineteenth century. The twentieth century has produced nothing as yet, even out of the agony and bloody sweat of a Gethsemane fiercer than the Civil War, which approximates to the spiritual austerity of Lincoln's major utterances. That nobility of his rested, not so much upon his brief for the justice of God in history, as upon his appeal to the penitential temper in his own race and nation.

We need in the Christian pulpit to-day a full and candid use of all that modern science and modern literature have done to restate

the doctrine of original sin in intelligible and credible terms, that we may press home to men their lost and needy state, their opportunity for repentance and their prospect of forgiveness and salvation. In no other way is there the slightest hope that the years immediately before us are to be in any real way more truly the days of the Son of Man than the years immediately behind us.

The shouting and the tumult dies,
  The captains and the kings depart.
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.

CHAPTER V.

Is Christianity Practicable?

How very hard it is to be
A Christian! Hard for you and me,
Not the mere task of making real
That duty up to its ideal,
Effecting thus complete and whole,
A purpose for the human soul—
For that is always hard to do;
But hard I mean for me and you
To realize it more or less,
With even the moderate success
Which commonly repays our strife
To carry out the aims of life.

ROBERT BROWNING wrote these familiar words in 1850. They were strangely prophetic of the whole drift of subsequent religious thought. In other days men asked, "Is Christianity credible?" But for the past half century, and to-day with increasing perplexity, men are asking, "Is Christianity practicable?"

The gospel of Jesus can never be presented to men, in its integrity, as an easy vocation. From the first, even in the realms of purely private virtue, its appeal has been to the athletic, ardent and sacrificial impulses of the human soul. The author of our faith and all his noblest mediators down the centuries have had a baffling way of welcoming "each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough." This personal struggle has kept the soul of Christianity alive. A traveler once stopped at the door of a mediaeval hermit's cell and asked him how it was with the lust of the flesh. The old man answered, "It knocketh but it passeth on." In those words was the whole long history of a solitary discipline, the world forgetting and by the world forgot, which took no count of what we call the modern social gospel, and yet was in its own way part of the central effort of the Christian life.

There is a familiar type of Christianity which would confine itself severely to the development of private piety and would deliberately ignore the wider implications of the Christian ethic. This type at its lowest is represented by those survivors of Puritan individualism who content themselves with a rather arid impeccability in private life, but who have no interest in the social content of Christianity. They are ethical bimetallists. They try to put their personal character in its narrower contacts beyond the reach of criticism, and they deprecate what they consider the slur cast upon private piety by a wide concern for the Christian status of society. At its best and noblest this type is represented by Tolstoi, who said quite flatly, "The Christian teaching does not prescribe any laws for all men, but explains to each separate man his position in the world and shows him what for him personally results from that position." The traditional individualism of the whole Protestant interpretation of the religious life has contributed to this point of view. The fluid conceptions of personality, which prevailed when the Christian faith was first formulated, are alien to the whole Anglo-Saxon temperament, which holds doggedly by its doctrine of the impenetrable ego, and which looks with temperamental disfavor upon any mystical theories of the relation of the individual to society and to God. There are still in our modern Western Christendom vast numbers of earnest persons who cling to the conviction that a man's sole moral duty, to use the homely vernacular of one of them, is to "tidy up his own front yard."

Against this point of view what we call the social gospel is in revolt. Like all revolutions it has swung to the other extreme and may occasionally overstate its own case. There is, in the youth of to-day, a certain cavalier indifference to private piety going hand in hand with a genuine concern for the corporate aspects of the Christian life which perplexes and troubles the older generation. The fathers find it hard to believe that the sons who seem so lax in their standards of private morality can be sincere in their preoccupation with social problems. They suspect the moral integrity of the oncoming generation, which plays fast and loose with the blue laws at the same time that it professes to suffer moral distress over the existence of slums and child labor and the like. We shall eventually have to strike some moral mean between these two extremes. If the elder type of moral individualism was

too provincial in its conception of the Christian life, the modern type may well become too vague and impersonal. The social gospel is in a fair way to develop a breed of Christians who face every moral challenge with the evasion, "Lord, and what wilt thou have the social order to do?" In the last analysis the answer to this question runs true to the old form, "If I will that the social order tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." In its extremer forms the social gospel is open to just as grave abuses as the rank individualism of Puritanism. The burden of social obligation when overoppressive may end in moral discouragement and indifference, and these vaster, vaguer considerations may become for us a city of moral refuge where we seek shelter from the accusations and inspirations of our own intimate conscience, which in the last analysis always dares us to step out from the ranks into some prophetic and pioneering solitude.

Between these two extremes the mind of the normal Christian oscillates. At one moment we feel the validity of the dogged individualism of the fathers, the reckless solitude of a Tolstoi, and at another moment we feel the truth of the dictum that we never can be saved apart from the Beloved Community and that this Beloved Community is potential in the world where we do our work and live our lives. But it is perfectly clear, whatever mean may be struck between these two extremes, or whatever comprehensive conception of the Christian life may finally embrace them both, that the individual problems of discipleship cannot be dissociated, in this generation, from their social setting. "Tidying up our own front yard," put it how we will, is a larger task than it used to be in the days when every man's front yard was clearly defined by a picket fence. Picket fences are to-day the sign of provincialism. They tend more and more to disappear from our yards and our ethics. For every man there is a dubious borderland where his estate abuts upon his neighbor's estate or upon the common highway, and moral tidiness demands a certain generosity and community spirit in the definition of its task.

What gives to the Christian religion as a moral program its poignant perplexity is the conviction that one never can be a Christian in the full and perfect sense of the word, in the world as it now is. With the best will in the world many of the major Christian impulses seem to be thwarted and rendered ineffectual

by the existing order. And it is the discouragement, born of this sense of maladjustment, which creates for the normal Christian of to-day his graver moral problem.

We have, for example, from the mind of Christ a religion which is characterized above all else by its insistence upon "love" as the plainest of its hall-marks and the finest of its graces. We sorely need some new word to translate the gospel original. The hard-worked Anglo-Saxon term "love" does duty for three or four words in the ancient tongues which ranged in meaning all the way from an almost passionless and impersonal devotion, through the realms of Platonic friendship, to a candid eroticism. At present the word "love" is too sicklied over with sentimentalism to be of much service to the gospel idea. It was not until the third or fourth century that the language of eroticism entered into the symbolism of the Christian life, and its entry is generally admitted to be a sign of decadence. The idea which inspired Jesus and Paul was much nearer what we mean by loyalty or a great good will. To rescue the conception of *agape* from its cloying associations is part of the office of the Christian preacher to-day. Nietzsche's revolt against Christianity, in so far as it was a protest against sentimentalism, was entirely valid.

May we say broadly that the Christian motive of love implies a coöperative view of human life? Its central dictum is its statement that all we are brothers, members one of another, that virtue and sin are both "in widest commonalty spread." But over against this coöperative view of life, implied by the Christian ethic, there stands the major institution of competition, which generates most of the social energy of the present day, and by which success and failure are measured.

How to apply a coöperative conception of life to competitive processes and to express the one adequately through the other is a problem which may well baffle the shrewdest casuist. And it is just because the social machinery of the day in trade and statescraft and war seems so ill fitted to express the central Christian conviction that many men feel that Christianity is impracticable. The would-be Christian of to-day is much in the position of a householder who moves from the country to the city. He has among his possessions a number of electrical contrivances built to be run on the alternating current supplied by most provincial

companies. After he moves into the city he finds that the municipal plant furnishes a direct current and when he plugs in his fixtures nothing happens. He must either buy a transformer, which will change the current, or else he must scrap his fixtures and buy a new set to be used on the direct current. If he makes his standard of electrical excellence the devices which he already possesses he must conclude that the direct current is an impracticable form of electrical energy and will condemn it as useless.

In some such way the mind of the modern world approaches the Christian religion. Most of the social machinery in our world was built to be operated by the alternating current of a competitive view of life. Connect this machinery with the direct current of Christ's great good will, his utterly coöperative conception of the moral life, and nothing happens. The wheels of modern business and modern war stand still. The energy which comes direct from the mind of Christ is perfectly helpless so far as many if not most of our present industrial and political contrivances are concerned.

It would be a real help to the clarification of our religious thinking if we would admit candidly and without reservations, that in many situations Christianity is impracticable to-day. There is no moral gain in simply inspecting the wiring and polishing the contacts. There is a fundamental discrepancy which might as well be admitted. For when a man makes his standard of moral judgment the normal competitive institutions of modern life, and insists upon testing all forms of spiritual energy by them, he may as well rule Christianity out. The humane spirit which emanates from Jesus may limit the graver abuses of competition, and may seek to safeguard the welfare of those who suffer too grievously at its hands, but so long as the competitive view of life is accepted as the law and gospel of the moral life, the religion of Jesus is an impracticable religion, and may as well be given up. The logical consistency of the Prussian view of war lay in its perception of this fact, even when it did grossest wrong to those dumb humane instincts in our nature which seem always to be in revolt against the extreme consequences of the competitive view of life. The Prussians were logically right, even though they turned back the clock a thousand years in the history of the humane spirit. Bernhardi saw clearly that the ultimately coöperative view of human life in the Christian religion could not be turned to final account

in the waging of war, therefore he had no hesitation in dismissing Jesus as, at this point, an impractical man. As a soldier he made no profession of Christianity, but drove his machinery by the alternating current of ruthless competition.

The error in this reasoning, however, lies in its premise. When we say, as we must often say in certain clear-cut competitive dilemmas, the Christian religion is impracticable in this connection, we may be passing judgment on our existing social machinery even more truly than on the energy of the gospel. The direct current of the municipal electric company is impracticable only to the man who insists upon testing its value and validity by the provincial machinery he brings with him. If he is willing to transform the current, or better still, to equip himself with a fresh set of devices, he will find it entirely practicable. His first snap judgment of impracticability is quite as truly a judgment on himself and his own devices as upon the form of power he cannot utilize. The same thing is true in the world's cavalier judgments of the Christian ethic. An impracticable and morally impossible situation arises when we try to arbitrate on the basis of the gospel a strike which has gone beyond all limits of mutual understanding and mutual interests and has become a simple test of endurance between capital and labor. "Man, who made me a divider between you?" Christianity was impracticable in that concrete dilemma with which Jesus himself was confronted. He did not try to pretend that it was otherwise. He gave up that problem as having no possible Christian solution.

This whole argument, then, cuts both ways. The Christian preacher would do well to follow Jesus' example in these situations, and not assume that Christianity is always practicable. And where the world says, "So much the worse, then, for Christianity," he would do well to reply with equal bluntness, "So much the worse for your competitive view of life, and all the institutions which live by it."

Moreover, the futility of passing finally upon the practicability of any idea on the basis of existing usage is perfectly clear when one reviews the history of the world's great discoveries in the pure and applied sciences. Under the tender mercies of the Inquisition Galileo recanted the heresy of the Copernican astronomy. The "practical"-minded Ptolemaics were too strong for

his old age and growing infirmity. But he gave to every theory judged impracticable by its own time its one priceless text, *E pur se muove*—"It moves for all that." There probably is not a single characteristic device of modern civilization which did not have to make its way in the world in the face of the advance dogmatic statement that it was impracticable. The settled hostility of the existing order to any proposition, mechanical or moral, which calls for a radical readjustment of life's methods is, perhaps, the plainest fact on the pages of the past.

In his "History of the United States," McMasters chronicles the early fortunes of some of the now accepted commonplaces of the present order. In their own first time they all had to run the gauntlet of the criticism that they were impracticable. Of Arkwright's spinning-jenny he says: "It was indeed with this at first as with every great invention, from the alphabet to the printing press, from the printing press to the railroad, from the railroad to the telegraph. It was bitterly opposed. The jennies were long operated in secret. The life of the inventor was threatened. On more than one occasion the machines were broken to pieces by an angry mob." So with the steamboat. "Fulton in 1807 made his trip to Albany on the famous Clermont, and used it as a passenger boat till the end of the year. But he met with the same opposition which in our time we have seen expended on the telegraph and sewing-machine, and which, some time far in the future, will be encountered by inventions and discoveries of which we have not now the smallest conception. No man in his senses, it was asserted, would risk his life in such a fire boat as the Clermont when the river was full of good packets." Alexander Hamilton met similar opposition when in 1791 he launched his plan for the Federal Bank. There were at that time only four banks in the United States, but in the four cities where these banks existed "Five men out of ten had nothing to put in them. Of those who had, some were deterred from making deposits by the recollection that their fathers had never done so before them, others by the strong antipathy which they felt for banks in general. The old way, they said, of doing business was good enough. If a man were prosperous and had cash to spare, the best place to keep it was in his own house under his own lock and key."

As for the Constitution of the United States, it was with the

greatest difficulty that it established itself in the face of the bitter hostility and dismal predictions which it aroused. It seems to have been regarded by the Antifederalists of that day much as the Covenant of the League of Nations has been regarded by the great majority of Americans to-day, a useless and Utopian scheme. The criticisms visited upon it were precisely those which in the past two years have been passed upon the Covenant as an idealistic and impracticable program. "The sovereignty of the States was destroyed in its most precious parts. The form, indeed, of a republican government was guaranteed to each by express words; but any one who would read the instrument carefully, and not suffer his understanding to be clouded with a multitude of fine phrases could see that it was the form, and not the substance that was promised. The most baleful results were certain to come. . . . One representative for thirty thousand men is too small. . . . The prospect in Massachusetts was not a pleasing one. John Hancock, the Governor, gave the constitution but lukewarm support. Samuel Adams was strongly opposed to it. Dane, one of the congressmen, had denounced it in the halls of Congress, and Gerry, one of the delegates at Philadelphia, had stoutly refused to sign it. . . . Towards the Continental Government all of the thirteen states acted precisely as if they were dealing with a foreign power. In truth, one of the truest patriots of New England had not been ashamed to stand up in the Massachusetts House of Deputies and speak of the Congress of the States as a foreign government. To him the smallest interest of the little patch of earth he called his native state was of far more importance than the greatest interest of the Confederation of States." Such were the Jeremiads addressed to the newborn Federal Government.

Altogether the charge of impracticability against the Christian religion is simply one aspect of the settled opposition of the existing order to any program which means radical change and readjustment. Seen in long retrospect it has been just those more daring visions of the human mind in invention and statescraft, dismissed in their own day as Utopian and revolutionary, which have lifted and advanced society.

"St. Paul complimented his Corinthian converts," writes Lord Bryce, "on their 'suffering fools gladly.' It is hard to suffer cranks

gladly, for they are impracticable persons. . . . Yet they ought to be borne with, for the propensity to mere imitation is so common, and independence of thinking is so rare, that much must be pardoned to those who break the monotony of ordinary opinion. Moreover, the longer we are in politics, the more do we realize that our judgment is fallible. Practical politicians are too apt to be impatient of what seems unpractical. Some of those so-called cranks for whom their own contemporaries had no use, proved in the end to have been the pioneers of great reforms."

And the reverse side of this shield of impracticability has been stated by Thomas Hardy, never better:

"Was Yeobright's mind well-proportioned? No. A well proportioned mind is one which shows no particular bias; one of which we may safely say that it will never cause its owner to be confined as a madman, tortured as a heretic, or crucified as a blasphemer. Also, on the other hand, that it will never cause him to be applauded as a prophet, revered as a priest, or exalted as a king. Its usual blessings are happiness and mediocrity. It produces the poetry of Rogers, the paintings of West, the spiritual guidance of Sumner; enabling its possessors to find their way to wealth, to wind up well, to step with dignity off the stage, to die comfortably in their beds, and to get the decent monument which, in many cases, they deserve."

There is no doubt that these are "the people" in their own time, but in history their practical wisdom always dies with them. The Christian religion stands to lose nothing, in long historical perspective, when at any given moment men declare its morality to be visionary and unpractical. On the contrary, it thereby takes its place with those movements which are continually remaking and elevating human society because they refuse to identify human possibility with present achievement. The Christian counsels to love, forgiveness and the like may often be, in concrete dilemmas, socially impracticable. They simply will not work because the conditions in which the moral problem is stated do not allow of their working and were not intended to utilize them. But what of it? So were the locomotive, the automobile, the aeroplane, the wireless telegraph and telephone declared impracticable by hard-headed men of common sense. So were Democracy, and the Constitution of the United States. The final tale of human history is

yet to tell. Shaw states the case once and for all when he says, "In short, Christianity, good or bad, right or wrong, must perforce be left out of the question in human affairs until it is made practically applicable to them by complicated political devices." The task for the social gospel is not the direct application of the Christian idea to every phase of the existing order, but the deliberate construction of experimental ventures in whole-hearted coöperation which alone can offer to the gospel of Jesus its opportunity to energize the social mechanism.

In short, the practical mind fails to sense in this whole troubled maladjustment the plain fact that what gives to any and all idealisms their real significance is precisely their impracticability at the present moment. In this respect Christianity does not stand apart from all the world's idealisms, but takes its place as one of them, the major of them. All ardent moral effort has about it for the moment the suggestion of impossibility. The dilemma is bluntly stated by A. E. Taylor, in his "Problem of Conduct":

"Make your account of the ethical ideal which you propose for realization within your own experience and that of your own immediate circle adequate, and you will find that your ideal has *ipso facto* become unrealizable under the given conditions; content yourself with a statement of what *is* realizable, and you will find that, as an account of an ideal, it is most deplorably low and inadequate. . . . The thesis of this antinomy may be briefly given as 'my ethical end must at least be capable of attainment,' and the antithesis as 'my end, just because it is an *ethical* end, must be incapable of attainment.' "

There is no escape within the limits of morality from this contradiction, this dead center between idealism and fact. An ideal which will work at full speed and full power from a dead start never has been known and never can be known. Even those ideals which are capable of direct transmission to the load of hard fact have to be applied gradually. The most characteristic piece of contemporary mechanism, the motor in an automobile, is impracticable if it is abused. Many a man who bowls down the avenue to the day's work in his twelve cylinder car condemns the Christian religion because it is impracticable, but he forgets that he subjects religion to a form of strain which would wreck his motor car if he were fool enough to try it. The children of this

world are wiser with their cars than with their ideals. The modern motor is meant to develop sixty horse power to be transmitted to a load moving at a high rate of speed. But there is no motor devised which can start the car from a dead standstill in high gear. To crank the car or to push the self-starter with the clutch engaged and the gear in "high" is little short of mechanical murder in the first degree. The batteries are rapidly exhausted and the whole engine is put to a terrific strain which it was never intended to stand. Ultimately the motor "stalls." To meet this situation the engineer has devised just those ingenious contrivances, the clutch and the gears, which enable the driver to tune up the motor apart from the load altogether, and then to apply it to the load by a gradual application of power which never strains the engine or the driving parts beyond the breaking point.

Now it is at least common sense to apply the teaching of this homely modern parable of power to the problem of the application of Christianity to the dead load of the world's moral inertia. His biographer says of Canon Barnett that the parish machinery of St. Jude's in Whitechapel was inspired by "the spirit of a man who founded temporary helpfulness on deathless principles." Indeed, Barnett used to say of his own work, "The problem which is haunting this generation is how to open channels between eternal sources and every day's need." The practical folk and the idealists might, at least, get within speaking distance of one another if they would sit down around an automobile or over Canon Barnett's life. The Canon and his wife once attempted the reformation of a confirmed drunkard, and they set before him as his immediate ideal not total abstinence from the first, but getting drunk only twice a week for a while, instead of every day! They threw the moral gears into low speed until they had their subject in motion.

The failure of the practical man to sense the delicate structure of all idealism rests in his ethically impossible assumption that the nobler an ideal is, the more immediately effective it ought to be. If it is not at once effective, he fails to understand it and discards it as useless. Whereas, as a matter of moral history, the more high powered an idealism, the greater the number of gear shifts necessary to transmit its full power to the dead load of fact. Only low-powered cars can reduce the number of speeds with safety.

And only a low-powered morality can operate full speed upon the inert world the moment it is turned over.

The life of Luther furnishes a notable example of the wise application of idealism to fact. Martin Luther was by no means the pioneer Reformer. For two hundred years free spirits in all parts of Europe had held what were to be the characteristic Protestant views of the Christian life. But they had launched these views in one or another of their aspects full panoplied from their own mature discipline. Luther succeeded historically where his predecessors had failed because he carried the German people with him step by step in the successive stages of his own spiritual history. He did not wait to announce the full findings of his religious venture before sharing them with others. The result was, that, taking his people with him by gradual degrees, he brought them to the point where they finally stood with him for the full Protestant doctrine. What was unique in Luther's history was not the substance of his final position as a Christian thinker, but the gradual method by which he carried Germany with him to the historically achieved Reformation.

Over against these considerations which concern the transmission of an immediately impracticable ideal to the world of practical affairs there is a further consideration which the idealist would do well to ponder. To resume, for the moment, the parable of the motor car. The purchaser of a car receives with the car a little book of instructions, and foremost among them are two bits of pertinent advice. "Do not idle the motor, it wastes gas. Do not race the motor when the gear is in neutral. More motors are ruined by racing them than by any other form of abuse." If the practical man has his method of abusing ideals by overstraining them and stalling them, the idealist has a kindred moral danger. There is a type of idealism which comes perilously near "idling the motor," using up spiritual energy without attempting to make any definite connection with the actual moral load. And the temptation to race the idling motor of the spiritual life is always very great.

The traditional revival meeting has fallen into moral disrepute because of the suspicion that it is merely a process of racing the religious motor. A tremendous amount of energy is generated, but it is not applied to the total social load of the time. The line

between real emotion and sentimentalism is always a fine line. But the fundamental difference between them lies in the fact that real religious emotion is always in direct contact with the load of fact. There is an actual transmission of energy taking place. Emotion, as its very root meaning implies, is a method of moving things. But sentimentalism, which outwardly seems to be very much the same type of experience, is really only a self-centered pleasure in seeing and feeling the "wheels go round." All morally sensitive and right-minded men shrink from this form of religious abuse.

There is not only an emotional unchastity in the revival type of religion. There is an unchastity of the mind in certain forms of idealism, which are far more interested in devising Utopias for the sake of the detached mental satisfaction found in the process than in actually trying to transmit any form of mental and moral power to the concrete human problem. In his own way the man whom we call the "intellectual" is as futile and unlovely a character religiously as the sentimentalist whom he despises. For what distinguishes the so-called "intellectual" from the true idealist is just this persistent habit of idling the moral motor, and in moments of mental activity racing it, without regard to fact.

Each type, the practical man and the visionary, needs the other to save him from the perils of his own isolated point of view. The problem of the practicability of the Christian religion is not the simple and direct matter which each too often seems to imply. Even where direct connection can be established between the gospel ideal and the present fact it is a process of delicate and gradual adjustment. The forced moral option, "All or Nothing," must always establish a dead center. There is a type of idealism which will accept nothing short of the immediate All, and therefore adds nothing to the present fact. And there is a practical type of mind which has so little understanding of the ideal All that it fails to utilize the emanations from the All which can be turned to immediate account. This type likewise gains nothing. Both idealism and common sense can profit by the parable of the motor and the gears.

We need, also, to avoid this moral dead center, some broad understanding of the way in which idealism does its work in history. Gladstone used to say that political ideals were never

realized. But that does not mean that Gladstone made no use of political ideals, or that political ideals have no effect on political fact. The same holds true of Christian idealism. The gospel morality has never been perfectly realized in any human society. But, nevertheless, Christian morality has affected our institutions widely and deeply. The abolition of the institution of human slavery may be credited to the general spread of Christian morality. The restriction of child labor, the prevention of industrial accident and disease, the increasing emancipation of woman, are all in some measure the consequences of a diffuse humane spirit which reflects the Christian ethic. These moral advances cannot be credited directly to ecclesiastical agitation. More often than otherwise churchmen have been social obstructionists. But over against ecclesiasticism there is the constant subconscious thrust of the Christian spirit constantly working its own changes in the common point of view.

We talk of the moral struggle as though it were a process of self-levitation, a lifting of life by its ethical boot-straps. We too often and too easily forget that Christianity is primarily a religion and not an ethical system. In so doing we limit the energy of our religion to our own unaided effort. Robert Browning says somewhere, in rugged lines, "What matter though I doubt in every pore . . . if in the end I have a life to show, the thing I did, brought out in evidence against the thing done to me underground." We have to struggle in this world against the things done to us from beneath. But that does not mean that we are to miss the help of the things done for us from on high. When Luther says in his "Table Talk" that we have a free will for the little things in life, building our houses, milking the cows and the like, but that in the great issues of life we seem to be in the hands of higher powers, he simply speaks out of common experience. "Falling in love" is an experience of this strange helplessness going hand in hand with a tremendous access of energy and value. "Getting religion" is the same sort of experience. Chesterton remarks that the value of any idea may be tested by our ability to use it as an oath. The great realities of life are those men can swear by. "Herein lies the weakness of ethical culture, for its oath is 'Oh, my goodness!' "

Now the Christian life, even in the moral struggle, is not a busi-

ness of saying, "Oh, my goodness." It is an experience of the Grace of God. What that grace actually means in the moral life Saint Paul has told us, "But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." In other words, victory in the moral struggle is not primarily a matter of consciously elevating ourselves. It is living life in the constant presence of the ethical ideal and suffering that ideal to work its own changes in us and for us.

Hawthorne's noble legend, "The Great Stone Face," is a discriminating study of the moral life, of the process whereby men realize ideals. The lad of the legend lived in the presence of the nobly perfect image so long and so devotedly that unconsciously he was changed into its likeness. The processes whereby human society approximates more and more to the ethic of Jesus are not otherwise. We live in the presence of a moral ideal which seems, for the moment, unattainable. But if we are not disobedient to the heavenly vision we waken some morning to find that all the time it has been doing its work in and through us, and we have been drawing nearer to it all the while. Religion adds to the strenuousness of the moral struggle what Wordsworth calls "a wise passivity," which does not mean inertia or indifference, but rather a correlative faith in the power of all true idealism to realize itself in us.

The task of the Christian minister, therefore, is to preach the total Christian ideal for human society in season and out of season, no matter how remote it seems and how impracticable the hard-headed world may judge it to be. He will do this, not because he expects the kingdom immediately to appear, but because he believes that there is an energy in true idealism, independent of all human wit and moral ingenuity, which changes us unconsciously into its own likeness. The servant of the gospel ethic will not fail or be discouraged because of the immediate perplexity and impracticability which attend his task. "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." He rests his moral case upon the Grace of God, which is no theological fiction, but the consummate statement of the working of all idealism in history.

There is a very beautiful passage in "Modern Painters" at the end of the chapter on "The Mountain Glory" in which Ruskin

says that it was not to punish Moses that God gave him at the last his vision of the promised land. "Thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither," says the Deuteronomist, interpreting this experience as a form of moral retribution. Ruskin candidly throws aside the Old Testament interpretation of that hour, and rewrites the whole story saying, rather, that it must have been to solace Moses and to give him peace at his latter end that God took him up into that high place where his labors ended with the wide prospect of his land of heart's desire.

We too often accept the Old Testament interpretation of the universal moral experience recorded in that story. Every true Christian has his prophetic vision of the promised lands of international and industrial peace, of righteousness and love in the social order. But he feels, too often, that it is to embitter the moral struggle that this vision is given him. It is far truer to human experience at its deepest and best to say that life gives us these visions of the morally perfect world to solace and sustain us. When his judge read Savonarola out of the Church of Rome in the public square in Florence, he said, "I excommunicate you from the Church militant and triumphant." And Savonarola answered, "Militant but not triumphant." Idealism always has this ultimate solace, and the idealist never fails to avail himself of it.

The one sin for which there is no forgiveness in this whole realm of Christian concern is that of skepticism as to the ultimate power of the Christian ideal to work its own final victories in our world. If we believe that truth is great and must prevail, we know that our fighting is not losing because of the "right man on our side." To lose faith in the ultimate efficacy of the spirit of Christ, manifested in his moral teaching, and to cease upholding the prophetic vision of a Christian order no matter if "his sad face on the cross sees only this after the passion of a thousand years," is to sin the sin against the Holy Spirit for which there is not and, in the very nature of the case, cannot be any forgiveness. It was this unforgivable sin which made the Prussian morality so ominous a fact in modern history.

The German mind, logical to the last, but without imagination, spoke, during the war, with dogmatic assurance of hypocritical England and hypocritical America, each professing a nominal national Christianity, but both actually manifesting many un-

christian aspects of national life. The charge of hypocrisy is the commonest and at the same time the most cruel charge which can be made against an individual or a state. If hypocrisy be the mere contrast between the cherished ideal and the achieved moral fact, we are nothing but a race of hypocrites. For there is no man who does not feel the gulf between what he is and what he aspires to be. But the essence of hypocrisy is not to be found in the mere distance which separates the idealist from the object of his moral effort. Hypocrisy lies in giving mere lip service to ideals which one has no deep desire to realize in life. Hypocrisy is not a matter of immediate ethical status, but of moral intention.

The Prussian solution of the dilemma created by the moral contrast between what Christendom aspires to be and what it now is, is very simple. The only difficulty with it is that it is too simple. It cuts the Gordian knot which it has not the patience or the wit to untie. Friedrich Naumann published in 1910 a very significant series of *"Briefe über Religion."* In these Letters he says:

"We live in an age of Capitalism, and we possess a religion which was born before this age. . . . We live in the midst of Mammonism, however little we may individually be the servants of Mammon. Our age has become financial and speculative. And in this age we possess a Saviour who says, with inconsiderate decision, 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' How can we escape the pricks of our own conscience? . . . This our capitalistic world, in which we live, because none other exists for us, is organized according to the principle, 'Thou shalt covet thy neighbour's house.' Thou shalt will to gain the market which the English hold, thou shalt get the influence in Constantinople which the French possess, thou shalt eat the bread which, in strictness, the Russian peasant himself should eat. And so on endlessly. 'Thou shalt covet.' . . . All the moods of the Gospel only hover, like distant, white clouds of longing, above the actual doings of our time. . . .

This gospel of the poor is one of the standards of our life, but it is not the only standard. Not our entire morality is rooted in the Gospel, but only part of it. . . . Beside the Gospel there are demands of power and right, without which human society cannot exist. I myself, at least, do not know how to help myself in the

conflict between Christianity and the other tasks of life, save by the attempt to recognize the limits of Christianity. A Christian who follows exclusively his Christian theory is impossible in this our world. . . .

Everywhere Christianity is part of life, nowhere life itself in its entirety. In a word, I know that all of us, if we are to live at all, are forced to accept and to use, as the foundations of our existence, the conditions required by nature in the struggle for existence; and that only upon this foundation do we possess the capacity for realizing the higher morality of the Gospel, in so far as this realization is possible upon such a foundation. . . . Now this means for our practical life that we construct our house of the State, not with cedars of Lebanon, but with the building stones from the Roman Capitol. Hence we do not consult Jesus, when we are concerned with things which belong to the domain of the construction of the State and of Political Economy. This sounds hard and abrupt for every human being brought up a Christian, but appears to be sound Lutheranism."

It may be sound Lutheranism, for Lutheranism always has been too much an attempted religious sanction of Prussianism. But it is not sound Christianity. There can be no possible quarrel with Naumann's statement of fact. Most of our modern states are built with stones from Rome. The common law of Christendom does look to the Capitol rather than to the Mount of the Beatitudes. But the normal Christian conscience dissents from Naumann's conclusion that this situation is morally admirable and should persist indefinitely. If the corporate Christian conscience of our time is denied at least the hope of a social order which looks to the Sermon on the Mount for its sanctions, and patient, painful effort toward that order, then for most of us the deeper, longer meaning of our Christian life has been taken away. Prussia, in the person of Naumann and his kind, rid itself of the charge of hypocrisy, passed so glibly upon the rest of Christendom, by the cheap and easy method of "recognizing the limits of Christianity," in other words of reverting to an essentially monastic conception of the religious life. If it be true that "recognizing the limits of Christianity" is sound Lutheranism, then Luther remained as truly a monk after the Reformation as he was before.

For monasticism is not a matter of hair shirts and cowls and bare celibate cells. These are, at the most, its outward and visible symbols. Monasticism always is what it was at first, not so much a Christian contempt for the world as a Christian despair of the world, a process of "recognizing the limits of Christianity," that is, of confining it to the narrow realm of private virtue and of abandoning the social whole to Satan.

In so far as there was any Christian piety in modern Prussia, it was essentially a monastic Christianity. It eased its conscience of the suspicion of hypocrisy by its frank definition of the restricted limits of the gospel ethic. It left itself free to operate in industry and statescraft and war on the basis of moral principles which had nothing to do with the ethic of Jesus. On such a basis there can be no hope for any profoundly Christian world. Once a reservation is made as to the absoluteness of the moral claim of Jesus over man's total life, the Christian case is as good as lost. Christianity may linger as an assurance to the dying, a solace to the bereaved, and the like. But its work in history is over.

Better far the "hypocrisy" of England and America, that is, a dumb, dogged hope that somehow we may get a world, in God's good time, more wholly Christlike, than the candid renunciation of this hope. The Prussian may have eased his conscience by his logic. But he forfeited at the same time any claim to a Christian mission in human history. And by his monasticism he not only left the world to Satan, he found himself forced to play the leading rôle as the *advocatus diaboli*.

There are men in our America, who, without realizing it, hold the Prussian conception of the relation of the ethic of Jesus to the structure of society. They value the sentimental and solacing aspects of the gospel as it touches their own mood and need. But they will tell you candidly, even churchmen among them, that they do not think our world as a whole could be run on a Christian basis, that they make no pretence to do so themselves and no effort to help realize such a world. These men are the loudest in their denunciation of monks and monkery. They rebel, from the depths of their well-fed, healthy and aggressive natures against all for which they think monasticism stands. But in so far as they are Christians, and many of them think they are in their private life, they belong to the desert and their ethic is clothed in the

hair shirt. For they definitely commit the wider world of things where they buy and sell, fight and rule, to the overlordship of Satan, Satan being a synonym for the pitiless brutality of the struggle for existence. Every accommodation train starting for the city on a Monday morning with its load of commuters carries its toll of monks, of respectable men who having been to church on Sunday and having concluded the Lord's Day by candidly "recognizing the limits of Christianity," set off to town the next morning to do business in a world which in advance they have deliberately handed over to the powers of darkness. The essence of modern monasticism is to be found, not in the Catholic convent or the High Anglican monastery. It is to be found in any respectable suburb where Christianity is identified with home, carpet slippers and the "outside-business-hours" point of view, all of which are left behind when the commuter pulls out of his innocuous suburban community on the eight o'clock train for town.

Spiritually such a man is taking to the desert when he goes to the city. If he knew himself he would have the moral courage to go to business in a cowl and a rope girdle to make it perfectly plain that his Christianity has no social interest and no social purpose and hope. He may draw a certain private satisfaction and solace out of his "restricted Christianity." But his Christian mission in history is over and done. He might as well live on a pillar in the middle of the Sahara desert so far as the City of God on earth is concerned. He will never lift the stone or cleave the wood to find and fashion it. Such is the Prussian sin against the Holy Ghost when translated into the terms of normal American life.

CHAPTER VI.

The Counsels of Perfection.

IN the fifth chapter of Genesis is to be found "the book of the generations of Adams," which is little more than a series of "vital statistics" from Eden to the Flood. We read that "Adam lived an hundred and thirty two years and begat a son and called his name Seth; and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years. And Seth lived an hundred and five years and begat Enos; and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years. And Enos lived ninety years and begat Cainan; and all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years." . . . "and all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty and nine years."

What an extraordinarily barren record it is. In the thirty-two verses of the chapter we cover eight thousand one hundred and twenty-four years of human experience, and nothing to show for it save these records of preposterous longevity. "All the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred and ninety and five years." Did Mahalaleel ever get tired of life? Is such a life indefinitely extended in time what we mean by immortality?

Jesus of Nazareth lived thirty-three years at the most, probably not more than thirty years. His active ministry was crowded into a few months. But of that life his greatest biographer said, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

When Jesus died on the cross, he cried, "It is finished." It must always seem one of the contradictions of history that Jesus could speak of his life as a finished life. It had to come to its historical end, but judged by the standards commonly used in passing on men's work in history his life was pathetically incomplete.

Consider for a moment the facts. Jesus was a young man. His death presents the most difficult type of human problem which

we have to face—the interruption and cessation, just at its beginning, of a work full of great promise. The synoptic gospels seem to suggest that the ministry of Jesus lasted only a single year, for they know only one Passover, that of Passion Week. The fourth gospel records three Passovers and thus allows but three years at the outside for Jesus' ministry. It is probable that the synoptic chronology is to be preferred. The crucifixion must raise in the sensitive mind, apart from its theological values, the natural rebellion which Tennyson felt at the death of Arthur Hallam, which any of us feel when a young doctor or minister or teacher dies just as he is finding his feet in his life work. We try to dull the edge of our sorrow and perplexity by the conventional platitudes, but they do not help much. We feel dumbly and deeply that youth deserves better of life than that, and that dying at such a time youth leaves life its heavy debtor. The last few years have given a fresh poignancy to this problem.

Jesus left his teaching unfinished. The longer one ponders over the New Testament the clearer it is that Jesus was not a system maker, nor an ethics professor. He stands nearer to the prophets than he stands to the professors, and even nearer the poets than the prophets in that there is about his teaching a certain splendid casualness, a great indifference to logical consistency and completeness. The "argument from silence" in the gospels sometimes seems their greatest argument. The truth that Jesus left unsaid, which with more time he might have said, bulks very large in the modern mind. For all their beauty and perfection the gospels seem very unfinished in volume beside Plato's Dialogues or the tomes of Saint Augustine.

Jesus left his work unfinished. If any modern parish minister were to come to the end of his life and leave his ministry at the torn and ragged ends which mark the spot where the cross wrenched Jesus away from his work, the world would instantly write such a man's ministry down as an utter failure. The last thing the world would say of such a task would be, "It is finished." Jesus began his preaching ministry with a following of many thousands. Before a year was half over he had alienated the thousands and reduced his disciples to the tens. Of the handful of followers who were with him from Caesarea Philippi onward one finally betrayed him, another denied him, and save for a

beloved disciple and a few women at the foot of the cross, the rest forsook him and fled. Even John Brown of Ossawatomie kept his ragged band of revolutionaries with him to the last. It is very hard, using any of our working standards of judgment, to see how such a life could be called finished.

The more we reflect on this seeming contradiction in terms the clearer it is that the world's habitual quantitative standards of value are simply ignored in the gospels. There is not a single quantitative test of excellence by which Jesus' life could be called anything but a tragic failure. Judged by the Genesis conception of life, Jesus died a mere child in the arms of history. Judged by the Psalmist's statement that the days of our years are three score years and ten, and by reason of strength four score years, Jesus lived less than half a life. If the gift of Proverbial wisdom is length of days, Jesus must have failed to get understanding. Nor are the Church Year Book methods of appraising Christian achievement of any imaginable use when brought to the gospels. "Number of communicants, value of church property, home expenses, benevolences;" there is absolutely no hope of measuring the value of the life of Jesus in these terms.

In the prayer of Christ recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John this word "finished" occurs again. "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. . . . I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world." Obviously the finished nature of the life of Jesus was a matter of life's quality, not of its quantities. The Temptation of Jesus seems to have been a struggle with what one of the moderns has called "the sin of the quantitative standard." Jesus must have come out of the wilderness with the whole quantitative conception of human worth put behind him once and for all, committed only to life's divine quality. It could not have mattered to him, after that, whether he lived one year more or fifty more, whether he had five thousand disciples or only a fraction of his chosen twelve, so far as his own inner compensations for living were concerned. His task was to "manifest the name of God," to reveal the qualitative perfection of his Father's righteousness.

But we live in an age of the quantitative standard. Much of our difficulty in understanding Christianity rests on this fact. It is

said of the late Mr. Pierpont Morgan that one of his desires toward the end of his life was to carry the electrification of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad so far by the time of his death, that the funeral train which would carry his body from New York to Hartford for burial should be drawn as far as New Haven by an electric locomotive. As a matter of fact when that day came the electrification of the road had reached only to Bridgeport, and the engines had to be changed there. On that basis Mr. Morgan would have said of himself that he had lived an unfinished life. For all his millions and his financial achievements there was a pathetic irony in those dozen odd unfinished miles between Bridgeport and New Haven.

But modern life is like that. The world is in conspiracy against the man who sets up for himself a quantitative test of a finished work. The tasks at which we labor to-day are so wide-reaching and so far-reaching, that it is given to few men, or none, to isolate their own labor and to see it begun, continued and ended as a quantitatively achieved fact. This is supremely true of religion's work in history. For the religious task is as wide as all human society and as long as human history, and the most that any man can do in his own generation is to lay well his tier of stone on the slowly rising walls of the City of God.

The last verse of the fifth chapter of Matthew has given untold perplexity and discouragement to Christians. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." So preposterous and impossible do these words seem that Christianity has always tended to seek some mitigation of this incredible idealism. The Roman Church would make the counsels of perfection obligatory only upon those who definitely enter a "religious" vocation. It then underwrites these counsels of perfection with less exacting requirements for the laity at large. The early churches of New England facing the same difficulty all but undermined the spiritual integrity of their Christian idealism by establishing a "Half Way Covenant" which met the requirements of respectable citizenship in the State but asked for no margins of excellence in the realm of the spirit.

Phillips Brooks used to tell candidates for the ministry that no preacher ought to set before his people ideals which he did not intend and expect them to realize. It would seem, on this basis,

that Jesus erred seriously as a preacher in setting before us an absolutely impossible perfection as the goal of our effort. For as the ethics don says:

"The theory of an 'infinitely distant' ideal, if you take it seriously, so far from elevating and purifying morality, makes all moral action unmeaning and worthless. And the mischievous effects of devotion to so perverse an ethical doctrine are not mere matters of theory: history, especially the history of the religious life of individuals and nations, is only too eloquent as to the stagnation of intellect, the indifference to pressing and practical human needs, the carelessness of real human happiness and misery, to which this unreasoning adoption of ideals out of all relation to actual human life under definite terrestrial surroundings has invariably led."*

The whole difficulty with the supposed moral problem of the "counsels of perfection" lies in the crude rule-of-thumb of the quantitative standard by which we ordinarily measure perfection. For as a matter of simple, literal fact Jesus did not say we were to be *as* perfect *as* our Father. It is only careless reading of the text, having its origins in the fixed idea of quantitative excellence, which so blinds our eyes that we cannot even see the plain words on the page of the gospel. What Jesus actually said was, "Be ye therefore *perfect*, . . . *as* your Father in heaven is perfect," a very different matter. There is no question of quantitative excellence here, only of the quality of our goodness. We are not asked to be as good as God is. But we are commanded to be good, *as* God is good, *in the way* that He is good. How is God good? The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' simplest answer to that question. The divine goodness differs from the goodness of the philistine world not in its degree but in its kind. The philistine world loves its neighbors and hates its enemies. But the Eternal Goodness loves its enemies, blesses those that curse it, does good to those that hate it, and prays for those that persecute it. It makes its sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends its rain on the just and on the unjust. God differs from us, morally, not because he knows more neighbors to love than we know, not because he has more enemies to hate than we have. His perfection is not a matter of degree at all. It is a matter of disposition, of

* "The Problem of Conduct," A. E. Taylor, pp. 395, 396.

quality. The Divine Goodness needs but one enemy to occasion its perfection, one persecutor to show its unlikeness to our imperfect goodness. Loving a thousand enemies would not make it any more perfect than loving one. Praying for a thousand persecutors would not enhance the qualitative perfection revealed in the prayer for one persecutor.

In short, the Sermon on the Mount, with its central counsel of Christian perfection, is moral nonsense when measured by the quantitative test. It yields its meanings and opens its possibilities only to the man who approaches it from this other and opposite angle. Jesus means us to be perfect as our Father is perfect. There is a kind of ethical soberness about the teaching of Jesus which delivers it entirely from the charge of being an "infinitely distant" ideal. The qualitative perfection of the Eternal Goodness is always open to any man who chooses to claim and exercise it in any given human situation.

We have spoken of those detached examples of the Christian life which are to be found scattered all through history and literature. What more could be added to them to enhance their perfection? Edith Cavell, in the last moment when she tried to sum up the whole temper of her living in those daring and revolutionary words, "I see that patriotism is not enough. I must die without hatred or bitterness toward any one," was perfect as God is perfect. No words which she could have added to what she said in that moment, no longer years in which to live out her faith, would have made her character more perfect than it was in that moment. Qualitatively her goodness was one with the goodness of God, and beyond that moral unity later life could not have carried her. Even eternity has nothing which it can add to that perfection.

Tolstoi filled hundreds upon hundreds of pages with his synopsis and exposition of the four gospels. He added other volumes of independent comment upon Christianity. Altogether his work as a lay theologian was not inconsiderable. But Tolstoi's most perfect statement of the Christian religion is to be found in his matchless little story, "Where Love is, there God is also." This brief parable takes only a half dozen pages, but qualitatively it is perfect. No quantitative development of it could conceivably add to its perfection.

The Puritan conscience unhappily severed the moral judgment from the aesthetic judgment. The two are to be distinguished but they ought not to be dissociated. And if there be in religion a real beauty of holiness then the aesthetic judgment has its place in the moral life. For the first axiom of aesthetics is something like this, Beauty is a qualitative not a quantitative excellence.

The normal philistine mind of our time usually has to undergo some process of conversion before it gets this point of view. Niagara Falls is universally disappointing to the man who visits it for the first time. He expects something "bigger." Nothing short of a transvaluation of values can ever reveal to him the total beauty of the scene; the direct precision of the American Falls, the "rest" and musical pause of Goat Island, and then the great curve of the Horseshoe Falls. There are other falls where more water drops a greater distance, but for perfect design they do not match Niagara.

The visitor to the world's great art galleries goes around in advance with his Baëdeker and penny prints. He knows what to look for. He has his double stars already listed. What troubles him, at first, is the fact that so many of the masterpieces are relatively so diminutive. He feels that a great picture deserves a great canvas. Only a reversal of his standards of judgment will ever persuade him that "Washington Crossing the Delaware," which takes a whole side wall, is not so "great" a picture as Gilbert Stuart's "Washington," which needs only a half dozen square feet. In short, beauty simply cannot be appraised with a yardstick.

Now part of the "foolishness of the gospel" rests in just this indifference to the quantitative test. "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called." The ministry of Jesus sometimes perplexes us moderns by its parochial character. Jesus was content to live among his own people. So far as we know, Caesarea Philippi to the north and Bethlehem to the south, a bare hundred miles, marked the geographical limits of Jesus' work. He undoubtedly contemplated our total humanity from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West, as part of his Kingdom-to-be, but he never traveled afield as a propagandist. He confined himself with a kind of deliberate provincialism to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

This inaction and indifference admits of no explanation save on the theory that Jesus was seeking not to extend men's quantitative conception of the Kingdom, but to establish for it a new qualitative standard. For this purpose miles were irrelevant. He needed only a child standing hard by, or a single visitor by night, or the woman come to draw water at the well where he was sitting. Qualitative religion is not a matter of statistics. The ministry of Jesus is a very poor and meager thing when compared with globe-trotting ecclesiasticism and its tuft-hunting among the mighty of this world.

The modern mind is troubled how to vindicate the central Christian affirmation that God cares for the individual. Its central reason for clinging to this faith rests upon Jesus' concern for and concentration upon the single individual. God, we say, cannot be less than Jesus in this respect. But Jesus' concern for the individual had about it a moral artistry which is very hard for us to understand, because we bring to our judgments the businesslike test of quantities, rather than the artist's subtler and truer test of quality. The workaday mind is ready to charge off the single sparrow fallen to the ground to biological profit and loss. It takes the artist to see the beauty, the pathos and the value of the lone little bird.

When we wish to seek help from the mind of our own time to grasp the moral paradox of the sparrow and the flower of the field, we must turn not to the statisticians but to the poets and the painters. Burns with his love of the wee beasties of the field understood Jesus. Wordsworth with his susceptibility to the meanest flower that grows, his single eye for the small celandine or the primrose by the river's brim, writes in the gospel mood. In his "Oxford Studies in Poetry," Mr. Bradley calls attention to the frequent and almost wearisome reiteration of the adjective "solitary" in Wordsworth's poetry. There is hardly a page of either "The Prelude" or "The Excursion" where this word is not found, and sometimes often found. "The solitary tree," "the solitary sheep," "the solitary tarn," "The Solitary" himself, incarnation of these solitudes, are Wordsworth's central themes. These pages will seem bleak, untenanted and uninteresting to those readers who bring to them the quantitative standard. They yield their burden

of beauty and meaning only to those who understand the qualitative nobility of the mind of Wordsworth.

In fact, nine tenths of our difficulties with the Christian doctrine of God's care for the single individual rise from our initial conception of God as the business manager of the universe. A large employer of American labor commenting upon the general labor situation in New England has said that most of the present misunderstandings arise from the lost contacts between the head of the industry and the operatives. Formerly the head of the business knew all his employees, but that is no longer possible, and there is everywhere a sense of broken human relationships between the man at the head and the ranks who follow him. How to restore those broken human contacts is the major human problem of modern industry. Our theology labors under the same difficulty. On the business manager theory of God's relation to the world of men he cannot care for us one by one. And Mr. Wells is justified in his remark that he does not want a God who can afford to be bothered with him eternally.

Only when we substitute the symbol of the artist for the executive does the doctrine of the divine solicitude for the sparrow become credible. A man has only to appeal to his own experience as a creative artist, no matter how meager and imperfect that experience may have been, to understand how the real creator must value his creation. Every one of us has hidden away in some private drawer, under his own lock and key, a poem that he once tried to write, a picture that he tried to draw. He values these poor things because they represent, not his quantitative dealing with the world, but his effort at qualitative perfection. He will annually clear out his drawers and burn the accumulation of receipted bills and canceled checks, which represent his volume of business. But through the years he will cling to those youthful and ardent efforts to create, because those creations were a part of himself. They never lose and never can lose their value to him, individually, because they are mind of his mind and heart of his heart.

Now Jesus' realm of moral values is far more truly that of the artist's creative effort than of the ledgers of the business. What gave to the widow's two mites their value in the eye of Jesus was their moral perfection. Hers was a qualitatively finished act, al-

though her alms did not sound quantitatively so loud in the "trumpet" that received them. And what revolted Jesus in the tithes of mint, anise and cummin, those meticulously measured sprigs from the kitchen gardens of Jerusalem, was their quantitative precision and their qualitative worthlessness.

Our contemporary moral problem, even in its social aspects, would lose something of its perplexity had we the courage to take our moral stand upon the aesthetic judgment which Jesus passed on the beauty of holiness. The social gospel will always be a heart-breaking business if it is interpreted as the quantitative redemption of the world. The single individual must finally be crushed in spirit under his Atlas burden of the whole world's sin and need. He will know "the cursed spite that ever he was born to set it right." The prophetic reluctance to face single-handed the cleansing of the Augean stables—"Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak: for I am a child"—has about it suggestions of the quantitative magnitude and hopelessness of the total task.

But Christianity, surely, was not meant to break our hearts and crush our spirits. And the social gospel is not meant to be an occasion for final pessimism. "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation" may make a certain appeal to the administrative genius of contemporary Christianity. But if it be conceived as a mere matter of planting mission stations so thickly over the world that there shall not be any ecclesiastical No Man's Land left in Thibet or Zambesi or New Guinea, it makes no particular appeal to the pure moral artistry of the gospels. True, Jesus saw "Satan falling from heaven" in prophetic vision. But his historical method of fulfilling that vision was by washing the feet of a few friends, by solacing the penitent thief on the hard-by cross and by forgiving the world that put him away.

In short, our contemporary "evidences of Christianity" are always of a relatively negligible volume in their quantity, but of qualitative perfection in their kind. What makes us believe that Christianity is practicable is not the array of figures in the Church Year Book, or a crowded ecclesiastical convention hall with its interminable resolutions as to this and the other social problem. Passing resolutions in convention, as one has put it, is "the most harmless form of amusement the human mind ever devised." What convinces us that we can be perfect as God is perfect is the single

qualitatively perfect episode which falls under our notice. It is the stray word or deed, happened upon in the day's work, which in its divine perfection stands out in glorious contrast to the philistine morality.

Some little child, by a simple and utterly Christlike word, rebukes and corrects the sophisticated wisdom of our maturity. Some sufferer in a hospital bears the world's burden of pain with a resilience and splendor that transmutes the whole quality of pain, so that it is touched again for us with the moral glory of the cross. "I wish," said one such, dying of cancer, "that I could gather up into my own pain all that the world must suffer from cancer and pay the whole debt as I go." In such a temper is the qualitative perfection of the death of Christ, which no quantitative measure of pain could ever reckon or achieve.

The Christian life is a morally hopeless enterprise only to the disciple who has not yet been converted from the world's rough and ready reckoning of the volume of goodness. Goodness has no volume. There is about it, ultimately, the arbitrariness which belongs to the conceptions of time and space. Infinite goodness, like infinite time and infinite space, means nothing the human mind can grasp. What there is in God is "Eternal Goodness." Whittier knew it. And this eternal moral life may be as perfectly experienced in "twenty minutes of reality" as in those nine hundred sixty and nine years which, at times, must have palled upon Methuselah! "The life of God," says Aristotle in one flaming sentence of the "Metaphysics," "is eternally like our life at its rare best moments."

The character of Christ is in its quality eternally like our Christianity in its rare, best moments, those moments when we know what it is to be perfect as our Father is perfect. The world does not give that quality, therefore the world cannot take it away. A man cannot add anything unto the words of such a record nor can he take away from them. There can be more books written after the New Testament, there never will be a more perfect definition of religion than the Sermon on the Mount. Life may multiply our experiences of perfection as the years go on, but life never adds anything to the single moment or the single, splendid, human situation when men know what it is to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.

CHAPTER VII.

The Scientific Method and the Religious Spirit.

IN December, 1911, Captain Robert Scott started on his thousand-mile journey across the Antarctic Ice Barrier to the South Pole. He took with him as medical officer of the polar party Dr. Edward A. Wilson. Wilson finally perished with Scott on the return journey from the Pole when, without food and fuel, they were overtaken on the open ice by a driving blizzard and by incredible cold.

"Scott's Last Expedition," duly chronicled in two volumes, added its modicum to the meager body of polar knowledge. But its major bequest to our time is the memory of the spirit which from first to last sustained and inspired it. That spirit was in part the doggedness of England. At a time when the modern world was beginning to doubt the virility of the Anglo-Saxon, these men proved, in Scott's words, written to J. M. Barrie just before the end, that "Englishmen can still die with a bold spirit, fighting it out to the end." The courage of these men was an earnest of that heroism which so soon after and so suddenly was to know a rebirth in history.

In other and equal part, this spirit was the genius of modern science at its best, the dispassionate quest for knowledge, the love of truth for its own sake. Among the most precious heritages which gather around the memory of these few men is a little poem which Dr. Wilson sent to the *South Polar Times* just before he set out, a poem which is both a premonition of the final tragic fact, and a clear witness to the scientist's method and purpose.

> The Silence was deep with a breath like sleep
> As our sled runners slid on the snow,
> But the fate-full fall of our fur-clad feet
> Struck mute like a silent blow

On a questioning "Hush?" as the settling crust
  Shrank shivering over the floe.
And a voice that was thick from a soul that seemed sick
  Came back from the Barrier: "Go!
For the secrets hidden are all forbidden
  Till God means man to know."

And this was the thought that the silence wrought,
  As it scorched and froze us through,
That we were the men God meant should know
  The heart of the Barrier snow,
By the heat of the sun, and the glow
  And the glare from the glistening floe,
As it scorched and froze us through and through
  With the bite of the drifting snow.

As a rival interpretation of life one might set over against these lines a stanza from Francis Thompson's "Nineteenth Century." He tells the roster of the poets of that century and then, thinking of Charles Darwin and earthworms and vegetable mold, he admits sadly that it was not to her great poets that England gave her loyalty, during the century gone.

But not to these
She gave her heart; her heart she gave
To the blind worm that bores the mold,
Bloodless, pertinacious, cold,
Unweeting what itself upturns.
The seer and prophet of the grave.
It reared its head from off the earth
(Which gives it life and gave it birth)
And placed upon its eyeless head a crown,
Thereon a name writ new,
"Science," erstwhile with ampler meanings known;
And all the people in their turns
Before the blind worm bowed them down.
Yet crowned beyond its due,
It is a thing of sightless prophecies.

There is no doubt which is the better verse. As a poet Francis Thompson stands almost alone in the last half century. He had an unmatched skill in the handling of the literary medium. Beside the precision and adroitness of Thompson's lines the doctor's verse is the crude and bungling effort of a prosy layman. But it is a fair question which of these two points of view comes nearer to voicing the central temper of our age. At the best Francis

Thompson, the minnesinger of an evanescent beauty, had little understanding of the moral passion which inspires the sober realism of the scientific spirit. For all his fumbling and unmetrical lines the polar doctor caught the central nobility of the genius of science, the conviction that the love of truth for its own sake is essentially a religious passion.

Of all the wars of history none, perhaps, has involved such spiritual misery as "The Warfare between Science and Religion." The initial bitterness of that struggle is now past. Huxley no longer rages about the world "smiting the Amalekites." Bishop Wilberforce no longer imagines vain things. The religionist and the scientist have both seen the folly of a war of mutual extermination. They have agreed to live and let live and to traffic with one another through interpreters. But there is still lacking, in the main, any actual communism of aim and effort. "To the scientist the earth must forever roll around the central solar fire; to the poet the sun must forever set behind the western hills."

The failure to establish any permanent peace between these two great human interests rests very largely upon the mistaken attempt to discover and to establish an actual identity between the findings of science and the fruits of religious experience. The two very often seem to coincide, but only to diverge again, and to baffle those who would identify them. Henry Drummond's ambitious attempt to establish an identity between the laws of nature and the laws of the spiritual life broke down in the end. He points out many suggestive parallels, which have a certain rough exchange value when the mental coin of the one realm is cashed into the currency of the other realm. But there his effort, and that of every other kindred thinker, begins and ends.

If religion and science are ever to see eye to eye they must approach one another on a different premise. Bertrand Russell says, in one of his essays:

"There are two different ways in which a philosophy may seek to base itself upon science. It may emphasize the most general *results* of science, and seek to give even greater generality and unity to these results. Or it may study the *methods* of science, and seek to apply these methods, with necessary adaptations, to its own peculiar province. Much philosophy inspired by science has gone astray through preoccupation with the results momen-

tarily supposed to have been achieved. It is not results, but *methods,* that can be transferred with profit from the sphere of the special sciences to the sphere of philosophy."

In so far as every religion is a philosophy of life these words hold equally true of the relation between science and religion. Modern Protestantism, as we so often remind ourselves, is not a body of belief, but a method of belief. Loyalty to the method is even more central with the Protestant than concern with particular results. "Love and do what you like," was Augustine's definition of Christianity. We busy ourselves to-day to make the tree of life good in the assurance that having done so good fruits must follow in due and inevitable season. The initial heresy for the freeman is that Jesuitical casuistry which begins by suggesting that a religious end justifies an irreligious means, and which concludes by vitiating both faith and conduct. As against such an ethic we hold that no significant result can be reached by a wrong method, and that every result of a right method must be valid and precious. In short, the problems of modern faith and conduct are not so much problems of "What," as problems of "How."

It is precisely at this point that religion and science can meet without private reservations and without mutual misunderstanding and recrimination upon the basis of a common method. It is not so much the findings of the scientific method as the initial temper and permanent moral quality of the method which make the modern scientist so essentially a religious man at the center of his character. For the intellectual mood which speaks out in those halting lines of the expedition's doctor on the Antarctic Barrier is very near what we mean by the mind's pure love of God.

> For the secrets hidden are all forbidden,
> Till God means man to know.
> And this was the thought that the silence wrought
> * * * * *
> That we were the men God meant should know.

In his life of Saint Louis, the French chronicler Joinville tells of a Saracen woman seen on the streets of Damascus, carrying a pan of fire in one hand and a jug of water in the other. When asked by a monk what she intended to do with these things, she answered, "Burn up Paradise and put out the fires of hell, so that

men may do good for the love of God." True religion always has to resist the doctrine of rewards and punishments, because they demean the essential nature of the spiritual life. They introduce prudential and self-contemplating motives into a relationship which ought to be inspired and sustained by love alone. When a man begins to calculate upon the profit and loss involved in his human affections he is undermining the very foundations of the life of love. He certainly must not marry because he can get a housekeeper cheaper in that way than in any other. If we can take Elizabeth Barrett Browning at her word the lover may not even say,

> "I love her for her smile—her look—her way
> Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
> That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
> A sense of pleasant ease on such a day,"
> For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
> Be changed, or change for thee. . . .
> But love me for love's sake, that evermore
> Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

What is true of our human affections is true of the life of religion. We are not to love God because we draw a passing intellectual or aesthetic pleasure from the act of worship. We may not love God because we feel the sting of the incentive of reward and punishment. There is only one way to love God, and that is for love's sake, that we may love on through love's eternity.

The mediaeval mystic has much to say of what he called "the unmercenary love of God." The Sons of Martha, who predominate in contemporary Christianity, always find it hard to understand the "lone, sad, sunny idleness" of the Sons of Mary. There certainly is no feature of the mystic's conception of the religious life which is more difficult for a commercial age to understand or more remote from our generally utilitarian and pragmatic temper than this same unmercenary temper of the mystic. But for that very reason there is no single aspect of mysticism which needs greater emphasis at the present moment. The mystic's psychological intuitions were accurate even though he had no formal psychology to aid his account of experience. And his ethical intuitions were at many points far keener and more discriminating than those of the modern workaday churchgoer.

The nameless author of the *"Theologia Germanica,"* that matchless manual of the selfless spiritual life, classifies religious men in four groups—those who practice religion because they fear the penalties and punishments which attach to irreligion, those who are drawn to religion by the promised rewards of an ultimate felicity, those who are sustained by a Pharisaic self-righteousness, and those who love religion for its own sake. The mystic regards the first three types as at the best proselytes of the gate. They really do not understand what transpires in the Holy of Holies. It is the latter group alone who really deserve the name "religious."

"This is our answer to the question, 'If a man by putting on Christ's life, can get nothing more than he hath already, and serve no end, what good will it do him?' This life is not chosen in order to serve any end, or to get anything by it, but for love of its nobleness, and because God loveth and esteemeth it so greatly. And whosoever saith that he hath had enough of it, and may now lay it aside, hath never tasted nor known it; for he who hath truly felt or tasted it, can never give it up again. And he who hath put on the life of Christ with the intent to win or deserve ought thereby, hath taken it up as a hireling and not for love, and is altogether without it. For he who doth not take it up for love hath none of it at all; he may dream indeed that he hath put it on, but he is deceived. Christ did not lead such a life as his for the sake of reward, but out of love; and love maketh such a life light and taketh away all its hardships so that it becometh sweet and is gladly endured. But to him who hath not put it on for love, but hath done so, as he dreameth, for the sake of reward, it is utterly bitter and a weariness, and he fain would be quit of it. . . . God rejoiceth more over one man who truly loveth, than over a thousand hirelings. . . . For a lover of God is better and dearer to Him than a hundred thousand hirelings."

Modern theology, with its doctrine of one world at a time, has in some measure completed the dramatic task which the Saracen woman undertook on the streets of Damascus. The fear of punishment and the hope of rewards hereafter figure little or not at all in the motives to the Christian life of to-day. The doctrine of one world at a time has supplanted the elder doctrines of heaven and hell. But this does not mean that the mercenary temper has

been exorcised. All that we have done in dismissing hell as a threat and heaven as an inducement from our religious appeal, is to substitute for the highly fictitious torments of Gehenna some of the known punishments in this present world for a godless life, and for the highly colored felicities of Paradise certain immediate substantial compensations for the godly life. Our modern Christianity has not abandoned the mercenary appeal. It has merely changed the notation in the logic. The sulphur of Sheol is supplanted in the present argument by the ravages of syphilis. The remote prospect of a world of sardius and chrysoprase is a "dead hypothesis" to the average man of to-day. But assure him that when the riot of Oriental opulence in the mind of the apocalyptic writer is "spiritualized" it means a generous bank balance and a country estate as the reward of Christian integrity in business and you commend religion to him with real effectiveness. The waters of the river of life where the fathers hoped to slake their thirst through all eternity reappear in contemporary piety as Metchnikoff's sour milk, which assures us of another ten years in this vale of tears. Emerson said that "Five minutes of to-day is worth as much to me as five minutes of eternity." The religion of healthy-mindedness intimates that it is worth a good deal more. Better fifty years of the world we know than a cycle of the Apocalyptic Cathay. The "red-blooded" muscular Christian of to-day gets up very little enthusiasm about joining the hundred and forty and four thousand who come out of great tribulation to stand before the throne of the Lamb, but he is always ready to join a class for "setting-up exercises." The *corpus sanum* is a much more potent appeal for present-day piety than the pain-drenched body of the martyr. But all this is simply a restatement of the doctrine of rewards and punishments.

In short, a certain familiar type of modern religion, following modern business, does not approach a man with a highly problematical investment which may ultimately declare disproportionately large dividends; it asks him to invest in an ethical proposition where the moral capital is kept turning over all the time, and from which modest but immediate dividends are paid regularly. What gives to the whole Christian Science and New Thought movement its particular appeal to our time is this busi-

nesslike identification of the spiritual life with its returns in the currency of this present world.

The common logic of the average apologia for Christianity to-day is bound up with the conception that it pays here and now to be a Christian, pays in health, wealth and long life. This familiar mercenary argument for the spiritual life is candidly Old Testament in its point of view. It savors of Jacob's covenant. It reflects the temper of the Book of Deuteronomy, which took no more interest in the dividends of religion in the hereafter than we take. The difficulty which attaches to the doctrine of reliable rewards and punishments for the religious life in the terms of creature well-being, springs from a rankly individualistic theory of the moral life, which has no solid ground in the facts. Lecky points out that the whole force of this argument depends upon the immediate organization of the given society in which the individual happens to find himself, "For there are undoubtedly some conditions of society in which a perfectly upright life has not even a general tendency to prosperity." It is certainly true that "the sin we sin by two and two we pay for one by one." Moral evil seems to end in a certain terrible isolation, since it disintegrates society. The loneliness of the sinner is his ultimate direst punishment. But conversely the sins that we sin one by one cannot be isolated in their effect and others are dragged into the wake of their unhappy consequences. Likewise the effects of private virtue cannot be monopolized by the truly moral man but become a fund of achieved labor into which others enter. In short, Bosanquet sums up the incredibility of all attempts to determine a commensurate relation between the individual's moral nature and his creature status in society when he says:

"If you could, or so far as you think you can, find a basis and rule of apportionment to units taken as separate, the results considered from an adequate point of view would certainly be repulsive to us in their details, and would contradict the conception of unity in happiness and suffering. . . . If we are arranging any system of enterprise of a really intimate character for persons closely united in mind and thoroughly penetrated with the spirit of the whole—persons not at arm's length to one another —all the presuppositions of an individualistic justice at once fall to the ground. We do not give the 'best' man the most comfort,

the easiest task, or even, so far as the conduct of the enterprise is concerned, the highest reward. We give him the greatest responsibility, the severest toil and hazard, the most continuous and exacting toil and self-sacrifice. . . . We may think of the honours and rewards that have come to the great poets of the world. . . . Plainly, there is no word to be spoken of any proportion between these and their services to the world. . . . There is no just proportion between their deserts and their treatment."

The modern mercenary argument for religion, then, must come up ultimately against its Job. Mr. Wells tells us that "all the world is now Job." He has somewhat anticipated the course of contemporary religious history. Mr. Wells is Job because the mercenary logic irks his soul. Years ago he assailed Mr. Norman Angell's thesis that war does not pay, as a double-edged and dangerous sword to play with morally. Because, as he then said, nothing that is really noble pays, poetry does not pay, music does not pay, love does not pay, religion does not pay. But in the main, the modern mind is a good deal nearer the position of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, who held that religion paid, than it is to the mind of Job, who held that religion does not pay. The preacher of to-day who launches his religious appeal with the statement that very probably it may not pay here and now in the coin of this world to be a Christian, will have to spend the rest of the sermon hour trying to regain the sympathy and interest which he will certainly alienate by his initial admission. For the Yankee in us all answers, "If it doesn't pay here and now to be a Christian what is the use of Christianity?"

Saint Paul understood the answer to this question when he said that we must judge spiritual things by spiritual, that there is no bank of moral exchange in nature and history whereby we can transmute the investment of a genuinely religious devotion into an equivalent amount of temporal well-being. The ethical superiority of the New Testament to the Old rests very largely in its answer to the problem of the Book of Job, a problem to which the Old Testament found no clear satisfactory solution. Jesus' conception of the sequence of cause and effect in the spiritual life is as far removed from the conception of cause and effect in Jacob's shrewd bargain with the Almighty as East from West. And never the twain shall meet in ethics. As a matter of fact,

Jesus promised to his disciples pretty much the reverse of all that the Old Testament had offered as the results of a religious life; instead of long life the prospect of martyrdom, instead of health hunger and nakedness, instead of wealth the penury of discipleship. There is very little of the coin of this realm held out to men in the gospels as an inducement to discipleship. What is the effect of which true discipleship is a cause? "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The Christian life is, and in the very nature of the case must be, its own reward. It is the joy of a clear conscience, faith, hope and love, and kindred abiding realities of which the mystic says, "the internal is also the eternal." Such is Rhodes's point of view when he says of John Brown of Ossawatomie, "God has honoured but comparatively a small part of mankind with such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards."

It has been said that two symbols exhaust all possible conceptions of the religious life, the symbol of money and the symbol of love. The doctrine of rewards and punishments, whether it is applied to eternity or to the three score years and ten, whether it talks in terms of sulphur and amethyst or of delirium tremens and bank balances, is cast in the symbolism of a money transaction. The whole argument is alien to the spirit of Jesus. The most that Jesus would say is that all these things after which the Gentiles seek shall be added unto you as the by-products of a religious life in a truly religious world. But even in the perfected Kingdom of God on earth they do not remain the objects of our efforts and aspiration. At the best they are happy incidents of the soul's love of God for God's own sake.

It takes only a single exception to wreck an abstract system. You need only to have known one good woman dead of cancer after a life of devotion to home and children and God's work in the world, to be face to face with the Book of Job again. You need only to have seen a single idealistic business man who has conscientiously tried to be a Christian in trade or industry, but who has gone to the wall in the effort, to realize that the cheap and easy logic which tells you that it always pays in dollars and cents to be a Christian business man rests not on facts but on the hope of recruits for churches and the like. The ethical relation between a man's inner spiritual life and his physical status in body and

circumstance involve social problems so intricate and baffling that it is all but impossible to establish any direct connection between our Christian character and our condition in this present world. In a perfect Christian world there would be, unquestionably, some direct and intelligible connection between the soul of humanity and its temporal circumstance. But in an imperfect and half-pagan age, when every man's health, wealth and temporal happiness are affected in a thousand ways by the environing world, it is little short of injustice and cruelty to credulous minds to isolate the individual from his social setting and to preach to him the sequences of moral cause and effect in his own case on the basis of the present paying dividends of the Christian life. Christ has many genuine disciples in our time with whom, as the world goes, things stand well. But he has as many or more with whom things have gone hard, whose devotion to the world of the spirit has been matched by pain, disease, neglect, failure, sorrow; to whom the money symbol is meaningless. They simply know that in the coin of this realm it does not seem to pay to be Christians. And if they are to be repaid, if there is any reliable cause and effect in religion, their payment must come in another coinage. We are not only giving the lie to countless facts when we preach the cheap and easy doctrine that Christianity is always worth while here and now in the terms of the world's values, we are making infinite perplexity and trouble for the future, and bequeathing to those who will finally know the anger and alienation from religion occasioned by our short-sighted logic, the moral problem which the Old Testament passed on to the New.

Nothing, then, is so much needed in modern Christianity as a revival and a restatement in the terms of contemporary thought of the mediaeval doctrine of the unmercenary love of God, which is essentially Christ's doctrine. If Christianity is to be permanently saved for the world it must be dissociated from the lower appeal which so often characterizes our present-day preaching.

John Calvin, in an early chapter of the "Institutes," makes the flat statement that the Essence of God is incomprehensible. He does not hesitate to ally himself with the agnostics. God is known to us only through his attributes discernible in man and nature. The modern poet very beautifully pictures certain features of nature and human life and then says of each in turn, "Some of

us call it Evolution-Autumn-Longing-Consecration, And others call it God." So far from being a pantheist or a latitudinarian he is perfectly true to the most rigid orthodoxy. A religious experience, at its heart, is just the winning of the insight which enables us to say "God" where formerly we had said "Evolution" or "Consecration." Now the major attributes of God for the modern mind must be the ideas of Beauty, Duty, and Truth, associated severally with our aesthetic, moral and intellectual judgments.

If a man were to talk to a twentieth-century congregation about the unmercenary love of God he would be speaking a dead theological language. But when he restates that idea as "Art for Art's Sake" he plunges at once into one of the major discussions of the day. Infinite pages of dreary controversy have been circulated on this subject. But at the heart of it there is a genuinely religious idea, namely, that the perception of beauty is its own sufficient compensation. No one can believe that John Masefield's meditative sonnets on the quest of beauty were written with an eye to the main chance by way of author's royalties.

> If I should come again to that dear place
> Where once I came, where Beauty lived and moved,
> Where by the sea, I saw her face to face,
> That soul alive by which the world has loved;
> If as I stood at gaze among the leaves,
> She would appear again, as once before,
>
> * * * * *
>
> Joy with its searing-iron would burn me wise,
> I should know all; all powers, all mysteries.

Francis Thompson seems to have allowed no copyright on his published poems.

> He lives detached days;
> He serveth not for praise;
> For gold
> He is not sold:
>
> He measureth world's pleasure,
> World's ease, as Saint might measure;
> For hire
> Just love entire
> He asks.

There are in all our great cities in third floors back, in attic studios, living from hand to mouth, countless, nameless young men and women to whom religion as the unmercenary love of beauty through music, painting, sculpture, letters, is the central reality of life. There is a certain flavor of mediaeval asceticism in their *"Contemptus mundi."* They refuse to be the hirelings of a mercenary time, preferring to be the lovers of God as he is revealed to them in the disciplines and compensations of their art.

So there are in these same cities of Mammon any number of men and women who seldom think of themselves as being religious in any conventional manner, but to whom the unmercenary love of Duty is an ever present moral motive. The lover of his human kind never forgets that in the moment of risk or peril the average man may be relied upon to do his duty. And this doing of duty in no way depends upon the wage paid, the prospect of a Carnegie medal or the popular subscription for the hero of the moment. The man in question does his duty because it is his duty, and it never occurs to him that he is more than an unprofitable servant because he has done that which he ought to have done. The fireman, the policeman, the railroad engineer, the ship's master, the nurse, all who in their own ways are daily sustained and in the moment of crisis transfigured by this central passion, very often come a great deal nearer to the deeper essence of real religion than the less devoted and single-minded folk in the sheltered classes of society who make up the congregations of our churches. For wherever there is an unmercenary love of Duty there is the Christian religion in its original austerity and nobility.

But this old idea of the selfless love of God finds its best modern exemplar in the scientist's unmercenary love of Truth. This is the major contribution of the scientific spirit to contemporary Christianity. The contribution is seldom or almost never noticed and pointed out. What gives to modern science at its best a certain ascetic single-mindedness is this characteristic intellectual temper and attitude. In this respect modern science stands in sharp contrast to the self-regarding and generally mercenary spirit of much of our apologia for present-day Christianity. And should a man ever have to cast his lot with one of these interests as against another, Christian history as a whole would warrant him in throwing in his spiritual fortune with the scientists who love

truth whether it pays or not, rather than with those religionists who preach a Christianity which is of value because in this world its hard cash dividends are regularly paid.

Our modern preachers need, above all else, to understand this central and distinguishing quality of the scientific mind. We are troubled, to-day, by the absence of the educated man and woman from our churches. We attribute their absence to the "unsettling" atmosphere of the modern college, its general agnosticism and its persistent brushing the bloom off the credulity of youth. But what intellectual welcome does the mind of the youth of to-day find in a church which approaches the tangled problems of modern faith and conduct with a timid "Hush"? Or how will the young man, disciplined by four years in laboratories and classrooms to the fearless quest after the love of truth for its own sake, feel intellectually and morally at home in a church busy with the sorry task of trying to prove that Christianity is of no value in itself, but only as it makes us long lived, healthy and prosperous? Such a man has grown up in an intellectual world where men are not interested in whether truth pays or not, they are interested only in whether the thing is true. If it be true, the question of its costs and compensations must be reckoned with later.

Our theological seminaries would be wisely advised if they prescribed as a requirement for graduation a course, not in the general results of modern science as they bear upon religion, but in the central temper and quality of the scientific mind. They would require the candidate for a theological degree to read the lives of Darwin and Huxley, that he might understand wherein lies the profoundly religious quality of such characters.

In the '60s, for example, there passed back and forth between Thomas Huxley and Charles Kingsley a series of intimate letters which for moral interest and essential nobility are almost unequaled in the last century. At one point in these letters Huxley says:

"Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before facts as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn

content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this."

Huxley was not an idolater of fact, a worshiper of the bony and barren item of information, he was a lover of the truth. When he went to Aberdeen to begin his duties as Rector of the University there, he spoke in his inaugural of the university as a place where the student breathed as his native air "a passion for veracity." This "fanaticism of veracity," as he elsewhere called it, was the central motive of Huxley's character. No man who is fanatically passionate in his devotion to truth is or can be called an irreligious man. The realm of truth where his mind moves may not be that which in other days was described as "sacred." But only a provincial mind dares to divide truth into sacred and secular. God is Truth and the Truth in every realm of human concern is God.

So again, the author of the *"Theologia Germanica"* would have found a kindred spirit in Charles Darwin. Not merely was there in Darwin that same humility and selflessness which were in the old German mystic of long ago, but no life of the nineteenth century came nearer to being unmercenary at its heart. In the little autobiographical memoir which precedes the biography proper, Darwin tells us of himself that his success as a scientist rested upon a single trait of mind.

"I had, during many years, followed a golden rule, namely, that whenever a published fact, a new observation or thought came across me, which was opposed to my general results, to make a memorandum of it without fail and at once; for I had found by experience that such facts and thoughts were far more apt to escape from the memory than favorable ones. Owing to this habit, very few objections were raised against my views which I had not at least noticed and attempted to answer. . . . As far as I can judge, I am not apt to follow blindly the lead of other men. I have steadily endeavored to keep my mind free so as to give up any hypothesis, however much beloved, as soon as facts are shown to be opposed to it."

How often does one meet in the modern preacher these outstanding qualities of the scientific mind? The sorry heritage of the traditional "apologetic" temper of the pulpit makes most preachers mere eclectic observers of fact and incident, gathering

together out of the vast chaos of things so much as tells in behalf of the Christian scheme, but without the austere fearlessness and candor of the scientific mind. His scientific hypotheses were as dear to Charles Darwin as are the creeds to the churches. It cost Darwin as much courage and inner pain to abandon his beloved theory in the realm of natural law as it costs the religionist to give up some cherished article of the faith. Yet the willingness to do this thing, to go wherever and to whatever abysses truth leads, and at whatever cost, is the essence of the profoundly religious quality of the scientific mind.

Professor Ralph Barton Perry in his "Present Conflict of Ideas" returns again and again to this characteristic of the scientific mind, its disinterestedness.

"Scientific method has come, therefore, to signify a respect for facts, in the sense of that which is independent of all human wishes. It has come to signify a conforming of judgment to things as they are, regardless of likes and dislikes, hopes or fears. . . . The true scientist will be simple and hardy in mind. He will keep his love of truth purged of every ulterior motive. This he will do not from frivolity or obstinacy, but in order to render his mind a perfect instrument and medium of truth."

If there be such a thing as a scientific system of philosophy, that system must be characterized by this initial detachment and indifference to the immediate pragmatic test. Bertrand Russell admits that most philosophies are more interested in morality and happiness than in knowledge for its own sake. "But if philosophy is to attain truth, it is necessary first and foremost that philosophers should acquire the disinterested intellectual curiosity which characterizes the genuine man of science."

The contrast between the disinterested and the interested search for truth is not, however, an ultimate and absolute one. Most of the immediate misunderstanding between the two points of view rests upon too short views of the nature of truth. The practical temper is certainly right in looking with suspicion and impatience upon truth as the sole prerogative and private monopoly of a mere detached and disinterested curiosity. The pedantic type of mind rightly irks the earnest and active nature.

But the quest for a truth which may be applied effectively to life must be undertaken in full recognition of the initial paradox

that the supposed truth, which is sought merely that it may be accommodated to the immediate need or opportunity, usually turns out to be a half truth if not a falsehood, while the truth, which is permanently and fruitfully effective in life, more often than otherwise comes as an entirely uncorrelated idea into immediate experience. If you are seeking primarily for something that will work, what you find is usually not the truth in the largest sense. And if you are seeking the truth you may discover for the moment something which may not be "workable" but which yields its measure of meaning and human worth only in due time.

The fundamental laws of energy and of the combination of forces, which have now been turned to daily account in modern civilization in the terms of the telephone, the wireless, the gasolene motor, the aeroplane, all passed through their "three years in the desert of Arabia." There is, for example, no spot so detached from the world of immediate concern as the research laboratory of some great industry. Here are men, like the poet "living detached days," who are neither operatives nor managers nor salesmen. They are simply set apart as a kind of priestly order in modern industry to go on the quest of truth for its own sake. It is a recognized fact that every pertinent truth of science may ultimately be brought to bear upon the processes of any given industry, but for the moment there is little or no relation between the investigations of the research worker in the laboratory and the task of the hand in the factory. The great industries, which live this dual life, have sensed the paradox which lies at the center of all important applied knowledge, that the only way to discover a truth which has ultimate applicability to life is to ignore the application for the moment and to seek the truth for its own sake.

Now something of this same sort inheres in the theory of the prophet's chamber in religion. "Let us make a little chamber on the wall," said the woman of Shunem to her husband, "and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick." That prophet's chamber was a luxury then, as it is now. It seems to involve a certain economic waste. It does nothing to justify its existence much of the time, save to keep open house for the great prophetic idea. A parsimonious and pragmatic criticism would suggest that religion ought to let that empty chamber to some paying guest of the mind. But, as a matter of actual his-

tory, every noble religious enthusiasm and every revivifying spiritual energy enters human life and human society by way of this prophet's chamber. The day came when the woman of Shunem had cause to be devoutly thankful for the disinterested hospitality which had prompted the building of that little chamber on the wall for Elisha. She discovered, in due season, the practical advantages of keeping open house for a wandering prophet. But that was no part of the initial impulse. And such is the paradox of the spiritual life, that only the single eye permanently justifies itself in the matured event.

It is at precisely this point that modern Christianity has failed and is failing most patently. A well-known fellow of an Oxford College and Canon of the Church of England can write:

"I may have been unfortunate, but it is certainly the fact that I have never heard a single sermon devoted to emphasizing the all-important fact that the love of truth is a fundamental element in the love of God. To love God is to hate delusion and to long to know that which really *is*. The love of truth is perhaps that aspect of the love of God which is the most completely disinterested. 'The philosopher,' says Samuel Butler, 'must be one who has left all, even Christ Himself, for Christ's sake!' But while the world—or rather its best men—have been seeking the truth, the Church has been interested in defending tradition, with the result that the intellectual leadership, which in the Middle Ages belonged to the Church, has passed to the scientist."

Just as our philosophy is too often a method of attempting to find rational justification for opinions to which we are wedded for irrational, sentimental and temperamental reasons, so our theologies are too often attempts to find a religious justification for hopes and purposes which rest on entirely irreligious premises. Prussia dragoons the court preacher to lend the sanction of religion to her temporal ambitions and then calls the resultant a Holy War, a Christian Jehad. But no one confuses the two. Against this whole temper the truly scientific spirit inveighs. The true scientist may not have a weather eye to profit and loss in history. He cannot prostitute Truth, making of her the kept woman of his worldly ambitions. If he is to win her devotion he must bring to her an intellectual chastity unsullied by ulterior motive.

"Friend, whereto art thou come?" Thus Verity;
Of each that to the world's sad Olivet
Comes with no multitude, but alone by night,
Lit with the one torch of his lifted soul,
Seeking her that he may lay hands on her;
Thus: and waits answer from the mouth of deed.
Truth is a maid, whom men woo diversely;
But woe to him that takes the immortal kiss
And not estates her in his housing life,
Mother of all his seed! So he betrays,
Not Truth the unbetrayable, but himself;
And with his kiss' rated traitor-craft
The Halcedema of a plot of days
He buys, to consummate his Judasry
Therein with Judas' guerdon of despair.

This is not merely good poetry. It is the point at which Francis Thompson unconsciously enters the Holy of Holies in the scientific temper of the present time.

It is little wonder that a mind so disciplined to constant acts of intellectual asceticism and renunciation, so utterly devoted to truth for its own sake, finds itself in a morally alien environment when it enters churches where Christianity is preached not as a pearl of great price in and for itself, but merely as a convenient and reliable means for realizing those temporal ends after which the Gentiles seek. There is little or no doubt that the mind of Christ finds a more congenial environment in the studio where beauty is loved for its own sake and not because it pays, on the ship's bridge in a gale where duty is loved for its own sake and not because it pays, in the science laboratory where truth is loved for its own sake and not because it pays, than in the average modern church where the preacher is busy with the sorry argument *ad hominem* in behalf of a Christianity commended to moral investors because it offers large material returns on the spiritual venture. A well known American doctor who is a product and incarnation of the modern scientific spirit put his finger on a sore spot in contemporary religion when he said to his minister: "The trouble with your profession is that it is not as honest as mine. You are not trained, as we are, to seek the facts fearlessly and to dare to face the truth no matter what its consequences."

There is no single sign of the times so disquieting as the constant appeal in behalf of religion to the mercenary spirit. Great

Protestant denominations in the desire to swell their exchequers have not hesitated in the last five years to commend their wares to the modern business man on the basis that the Church is a paying investment. Our daily papers and monthly magazines have flaunted before our time such arguments as this: Modern business rests upon credit, credit is impossible without honest men, the churches are engaged in the business of making honest men, therefore, Mr. Business Man, if you wish your business to prosper, you can well afford to make us a generous gift and charge it up to your sinking fund. Our denominational papers, interested in helping to raise millions for clergy pension funds, have preached the same shabby gospel; modern business depends upon law and order, churches make for law and order, ministers run churches, therefore, Mr. Business Man, you ought to support the clergy. Modern missions, originally the most selfless venture of the church, is always on the verge of stating its case on the purely business basis; missionaries go to backward races, they carry with them the furniture of western civilization, they unconsciously create a demand for this furniture in the economically and industrially benighted parts of the world, they are advance agents of sewing-machines, ploughs, tractors and threshing-machines, automobiles and telephones, therefore any far-seeing corporation will subscribe to foreign missions and charge the subscription off to advance publicity.

The spread of this temper will be the moral ruin of the churches. If it persists it will drive out of the ministry every self-respecting preacher, and will effectively stop the thin stream of prophetic souls still flowing into that holy office. For no man of moral freedom and passion will be content to ally himself permanently with an institution whose main function in history and society is buttressing up "law and order," when those words mean the existing prerogative of vested interests. Nor will such a man consent to enter an office which is commonly regarded as a mere private chaplaincy to big business. The tacit, constant suggestion of this whole sorry logic, that the main end of human history and the final goal of human society is a ten per cent dividend with an occasional "melon" thrown in, is simply so far outside the conception of human ends contemplated by the gospel of Jesus that it has no possible claim to the designation "Christian."

The artists know this, the men who honor duty for its own sake know it though they cannot state it. And above all, the scientist knows it. His whole life and discipline cut in the other direction. A century of devoted and consecrated inquiry has taught him that truth cannot be sought and found by those who have an advance prudential eye to the market price of knowledge. What measure of truth modern science has won for us has been gained by hardening the heart and resolutely closing the mind against the insidious seduction of the gospel of temporal rewards. The scientific spirit dominates all the nobler intellectual effort of our time. If thinking men and women find it hard to stop in churches which live at a moral level lower than the austere altitude at which science at its best always moves, then the churches have no redress and should have none. The church which has one eye squinted toward Mammon will never have that vision of God which is our eternal life. If the Church cannot shake itself free of the worldly-minded standards of much of modern business, then its work is as good as done, and the sacred trust of the unmercenary love of God will pass to the artists, to the truly moral lovers of the day's humble duty, and above all to those noble minds disciplined by modern science in the unmercenary love of Truth. For these souls, living their deeper life in their several forms of the selfless love of God, stand in the spiritual succession of the saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs.

For this cause I prayed, and understanding was given me:
I called upon God and there came to me a spirit of wisdom.
I preferred her before scepters and thrones,
And riches I esteemed nothing in comparison of her.
Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem,
Because all the gold of the earth in her presence is as a little sand,
And silver shall be accounted as clay before her.
Above health and comeliness I loved her,
And I chose to have her rather than light,
Because her bright shining is never laid to sleep.
But with her there came to me all good things together.

* * * * *

For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy,
Alone in kind, manifold,
Subtil, freely moving,
Clear in utterance, unpolluted,
Distinct, unharmed,
Loving what is good, keen, unhindered,

Beneficent, loving toward man,
Steadfast, sure, free from care,
All powerful, all surveying,
And penetrating through all spirits
That are quick of understanding, pure, most subtil:
For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
Yea she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness.
For she is a breath of the power of God,
And a clear effulgence of the glory of the Almighty;
Therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her,
For she is an effulgence from everlasting light,
And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,
And an image of his goodness.
And she, being one, hath power to do all things;
And remaining in herself, reneweth all things:
And from generation to generation passing into holy souls
She maketh men friends of God and prophets.
For nothing doth God love save him that dwelleth with wisdom.*

* "The Wisdom of Solomon," Ch. vii.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Liberty of the Parish Minister.

TO get on to that hackneyed subject, "The Collapse of the Church." Obviously the Church is as good as dead and there remains little more to be done aside from the decent obsequies. There is, for the passing Church, the mitigating comfort to be derived from the prediction that the mortality among all other ancient and venerated institutions will be high in the near future. Her going is so timed that she can point the way for a very respectable company of followers, the home, the state, the college and other outworn cumberers of the ground, which have been stricken down by the epidemic of "collapse," and have nothing more to ask of this world than the opportunity for decent euthanasia.

Meanwhile, "Who would have thought the old man had so much blood in him?" The Church is patently passing away from an incurable and pernicious anaemia. But since this is a lingering death, any number of humane practitioners are ready to shorten the agony by opening for good and all some convenient artery that invites the scalpel of wholesale condemnation. Even so, the Church lingers. Like Browning's martyr at the stake, the collapsing Church of the present time at least has voice enough to affirm, "I was some time a-dying."

As a matter of plain, ecclesiastical history, there never was a time when the Church was not in collapse. The spiritual specialists have always agreed in their diagnosis. This universal verdict may have induced a certain constitutional hollow-chestedness on the part of the institution which has now become habitual, and may easily be mistaken for an acute, rather than a chronic condition. For when the doctors all agree that the patient is suffering a complete breakdown, he must have more than a superhuman self-confidence if his own posture does not reflect the consensus of

expert opinion. He is convinced that they are right, and yet he surprises himself and the wise men by hanging on when, from all the signs, he should be dead and buried. He realizes that he is a physiological monstrosity and a medical scandal, but he cannot help himself. He even finds a certain perverse satisfaction in his innate vitality which cannot be measured by the book. The Church has always had to live, and indeed has succeeded in living for some hundreds of years, in the face of the combined and uniform judgment of the specialists that, from all the symptoms, she should be in her grave.

It is generally understood that the churches are practically empty. No one any longer tries to pretend otherwise. It avails nothing that many city churches are still crowded every Sunday, that many more are half full, and that most of them muster their handful of worshipers. Patently, this is the last flicker before the end. And what are these among so many? The time was when Jonathan and his armor bearer scaled the rocks Bozez and Seneh, to attack the Philistine single-handed, because, in those days, there was "no restraint to the Lord to save by many." But modern scholarship can dispose of that archaic temper, since the God of Democracy never does anything without first counting noses. In the old days it was considered dangerous procedure to number the host. But to-day statistics are the handmaiden of piety, and the figures are against the Church.

Yet empty churches do not seem to be solely a modern phenomenon. Nearly a hundred years ago Wordsworth lamented "The Decay of Piety":

> Oft have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek,
> Matrons and sires—who, punctual to the call
> Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
> Through the long year the house of prayer would seek;
> By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
> Of Easter wind unscared, from hut or hall
> They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
> But with one fervor of devotion meek.
> I see the places where they once were known,
> And ask . . .
> Is Ancient Piety forever flown?

That was in 1827. As Francis Thompson says of nineteenth-century England, "The east wind has replaced the discipline."

But at least things are no worse now than they were in Wordsworth's time, and a hundred years of snow, hail and stormy vapor have not entirely dissipated "the great congregation."

Altogether, the reputedly empty meeting-houses have been able to gather enough witnesses to embarrass the case for the prosecution, and the suit of Society *vs.* the Church drags on in the court of common opinion. After all, the major institutions of human society are not so collapsible as they appear to be. They were not fabricated wholesale for emergencies. They were put together by patient hand labor. And they betray, when their framework is investigated, the cunning of the human artificer at his best. They have gone up, like Solomon's temple, without noise in their building. And he who takes the social contract for wrecking them would do well to allow himself a little margin of time beyond his expectation of completing the job.

Certain of the Oxford colleges are built of a very soft limestone, dug from hard by, which weathers rapidly. After an odd century or two at the mercy of the raw air of the upper Thames valley, the fabric of these colleges looks to be in a state of imminent collapse. Two American women, wandering around Oxford not long since, ventured into one of these shabby sepulchers of "lost causes," pushed their unabashed way up a stair in the back quad, and opened a door. They saw before them a much alive and entirely contemporary-looking boy, sprawled out in his basket chair before a cheerful fire, filling the room with pipe smoke and his brains with the Nicomachean Ethics. "We beg your pardon, we didn't know that these ruins were inhabited." For the benefit of those emancipated investigators who look upon the Church as the home of a lost cause, it is worth while merely to say that the ruins are still inhabited.

There is, however, one distinctively modern aspect of the situation, altogether apart from the perennial Decay of Piety, which is in a fair way to depopulate the ruins for good and all. This particular aspect of the many-sided "Problem of the Church" bears the mark of our own time, has already become a sore daily perplexity to the ministry, and is fast becoming a conscious grievance on the part of the congregation.

Let us approach the problem by way of illustration. There was once upon a time a very romantic institution known as the Chris-

tian Year. This arrangement of the calendar, arbitrary, artificial, perhaps, but always suggestive, was devised to express a certain cyclic tendency in human nature, the desire to get back or come round again to some of the major items of thought and conduct. There was Ember Day—what a romantic name!—and Maundy Thursday—what an intriguing title! There were Innocents' Day and All Souls' Day. There were Advent and Holy Week and Whitsunday.

But this scheme of things has long since been superseded by another Christian Year, which every minister has come to recognize. He sits down at his desk on Monday morning to try to recover a little of the lost grace of "recollection." Next Sunday is Epiphany, so much is clear in the near future. "Recollected" to this tentative degree, he begins opening his morning mail. From an important-looking envelope he takes out a legal-sized document, an impressive piece of printer's art. (Mental note: That would be good paper for my church calendar if we could afford it—watermark shows "Capitalist Bond, Heavy Deckle." But we can't afford printing like that!) The document announces that next Sunday has been appointed to be observed in all the churches as Nation-Wide Anti-Trichinosis Sunday. The secretary of some department in Washington lends his sanction. A Minor Canon adds that the opportunity of the Church is plain. Inside the folder are pictures. Item: one trichina, very lifelike and sinister. Item: victim of trichinosis, obvious ennui. Item: our agent in Lone Ridge, Ford car and infected hogs in background. Item: cured patient, alert and aggressive. The last page announces that parcel post will bring cards allowing members of the congregation to enlist in the great modern crusade: annual dues, $1; sustaining membership, $25; life membership, $100. It is confidently anticipated that at least two or three of the congregation will join as life members, and that there will be a very general response to the appeal for annual dues. Cards are to be returned to—and so forth. There often follows an appropriate Bible text, counseling sacrifice, as a last succulent morsel of bait for the ecclesiastical mind.

The minister, whose business it is not to ignore any means by which mankind may be bettered, begins to see that Epiphany is after all an anachronism, that the great modern world has got

beyond that. Trichinae have the obvious advantage of contemporaneity. Trichina it shall be. The plot thickens, however, as the opening of the mail goes on. Five letters farther is a statement that next Sunday has been appointed to be observed by all the churches in behalf of the Relief of the War-Devastated Districts of Upper Senegambia. Very prominent names in the business and ecclesiastical world appear on this letterhead: well known bankers and prominent churchmen, with a smattering of the humaner radicals. More pictures of atrocities and plague victims. Obviously the need in Senegambia is as great as in Lone Ridge. The minister wishes to think internationally, and now leans to the war victims, to avoid the charge of provincialism by concentrating upon the American trichina. Perhaps it could be shown that Upper Senegambia is devastated by trichinae. The victims in both cases look rather alike in the pictures. In that case the task would be made simpler, and the collection could be equally divided.

But there seems to have been some lack of "coöperation"—fine upstanding modern word, that!—on the part of these agencies. The perplexed minister lets his problem simmer until midweek, and then finally decides that he will preach a regular Epiphany Sermon on the Manifestation of Jesus to the Wise Men of Today. He does this, not in a moment of petulance or distraction, but discreetly and advisedly, on the sober conviction that, in the long run, he will do both these causes more practical good by trying to make men understand the Mind of Christ, than by discussing the causes, symptoms and cure of trichinosis, or by getting mired in the political misfortunes of Senegambia.

His punishment tarrieth not. It cometh like the Assyrian. These causes keep tab on him. They write him off the great books of life which they keep at their headquarters. The report is passed on to other agencies that he is out of touch with modern life, that he is merely an impractical dreamer who cannot be counted on to help when the fighting is hard. The cause went up to do battle for the Lord and he stopped in Meroz. He has his taste of the curse on Meroz. Various members of his own parish, who are specially interested in the trichina or Senegambia or some other Holy Day in the modern Christian Year, begin to feel that rumor is true. Altogether he begins to realize that the world is determined to

write him down a renegade, and to adjust himself to that situation.

This is not rhetoric. It is hardly satire. It is merely a free paraphrase of the everlasting problem of the modern minister. The thing had gained great headway and vogue before the war. Even then, the laziest minister in Christendom did not have to stoop to buy his sermons ready written from that wholesale homiletics factory somewhere out West. He could get them all free in outline from the "causes." With the war there was hardly a Sunday when his way was not made plain before him, either by actual officials or by civilian philanthropies. The Draft, the Bond Issues, the Food Conservation, the Welfare Agencies—all of them claimed his instant service, week by week. He was given very little opportunity to reflect himself, or to ask others to reflect, that there are certain humane and catholic aspects of the character of Jesus which in history have somehow outlasted all wars and rumors of wars.

He was somewhat startled to find that the great world of affairs took him so seriously. Obviously, what he said still had some influence, and it seemed to be taken for granted that he spoke to more men and women than the "ruin hypothesis" implied. But he never had time to think that contradiction through. After the war his denominations, singly or collectively, having been illuminated as to the true function of the modern minister, descended upon him with programs for millions which, ten years ago, both he and they would have thought impossible. His leaders were certainly right to try to conserve the deeper moral lessons of the war. They were right as to the need of the world and the opportunity of the Church. But, somehow, in the process he found himself depersonalized. He had ceased to be a prophet and a pastor and had become simply a middleman. The modern world of organized philanthropy and ecclesiasticism had elected him salesman for its countless causes. All he had to do was to follow instructions. The thing culminated in the spring of 1920, when the Interchurch Movement relieved him of all further personal responsibility by outlining his whole half year for him. He was to pray in January, exhort in February, convert in March and collect in April and May. Somehow, he broke down under the strain. His life had

become too wooden. And he has been thinking his whole status over once again.

He has had time for a little sober reflection as to what the rest of his days are going to be if the process goes on indefinitely, and he yields the major point of his independence. Obviously, there will be no need for men to go to theological schools in the future, if this is what the Christian ministry is to become. Young men had much better take a couple of correspondence courses, one from the man with the magnetic index finger, who can make him a persuasive speaker, the other from some brisk, up-to-the-minute school of salesmanship.

But this prospect calls for a revised conception of the ministry. And its compensations are not those which he has associated with his past liberty of prophesying and his cure of souls. He sees himself as a kind of permanent beater for unending drives. He it is who, week by week, must hound the now attenuated and gun-shy giver into the open, where the causes may pot away with both barrels and bag their budgets. The beater has none of the sport. And he will be more than human if he does not come to have a certain perverse sympathy for the flock in the covert assigned to him. At least, he is perfectly clear that he cannot see them all killed off before his eyes, but must allow a "righteous remnant" to survive and breed, during the brief season closed to causes,—say in Lent,—against next season's need.

Why does not the Average Man go to church? Being a teacher in a theological school as well as a parish minister, I sent out spies into the great and wicked world last year to get an answer to this question. Effectively disguised in mufti, they approached the Average Man and asked him for an honest answer. They came back to the camp and reported with surprising unanimity that, among other things, the Average Man was getting tired of going to church to worship God and being offered the trichina and Senegambia as a substitute. One Average Man said quite bluntly that fourteen Sundays at the height of the season had been wholly taken up in his church by the presentation of fourteen different denominational and social causes, and that he found his inclination to go to church suffering a sea change. Not that trichinosis and Senegambia were "dead hypotheses" to him. He took an interest in these and all other similar moral opportunities. But

their name was legion; and any selection of them for the purposes of public worship was arbitrary. He felt as if the parts were getting in the way of the whole. The trouble with his moral and spiritual life was just that he could not see the wood for the trees. And the Church, so far from giving him the total perspective and helping him unify his life, was merely adding to his confusion and distraction. The Average Man was not quite certain what he wanted when he went to church, but he knew it was something which should have in it the element of contrast. He wanted a suggestion of the everlasting otherness of life which real religion always intimates. He believed that all the fine, unselfish, organized altruisms which abound in every city and claim the support of Church people were aspects of twentieth-century Christianity. He did not understand a Christianity which was so far removed from this world that it called these activities secular. He believed that modern religion is as wide as every honest effort to help the world. But he was getting mired in detail. He was losing the power to say "God" in connection with them all.

He seemed to remember something to the same effect in Saint Augustine's "Confessions." "What do I love, when I love my God?" asks Augustine. "I questioned the earth, and it said, 'I am not He.' I questioned the sea and the depths, and they replied, 'We are not thy God; seek above us.' I questioned the blowing winds, and the whole air with its inhabitants replied, 'Anaximenes is wrong; I am not God.' I questioned the heavens, sun, moon, stars: 'Neither are we,' say they, 'the God whom you seek.' "

All these were aspects of God, but religion, as the Average Man saw it, was just the power to say "God" where the rest of the world said Nature, Justice, Duty, Peace, Social Service, Foreign Missions. And it seemed to him as he reflected upon it, that the Church was missing its chance to help him say that thing. He listened in the shell of modern being, and he heard the roar of the sea of life, with its manifold activities. What he missed in the method and temper of the modern Church was the constant suggestion of a "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

Now the parish minister has a religious duty toward the Average Man in his own town quite as real as his duty toward all other men in far lands. As things are now organized, the ability of the

Christian Church to maintain and to extend its whole missionary and philanthropic program comes back upon the fund of real religion in the average men and women in all average parishes. The "friendly citizen" who was to help pay the bills proved to be a hypothesis, *et praeteriter nihil!* The parish minister does not wish to encourage the Average Man in a selfish and inert Christianity, particularly in a day of great need and opportunity. But he does realize, nevertheless, that it is possible in this day to preach a long-range and rather impersonal Christian charity which is very largely a thing of subscription lists and check books, and which brings with it no warmth and spiritual reality in the daily experience of this average parishioner. His first duty to his parish is to help the persons who comprise it to do their inevitable daily work in a Christian spirit. If he fails to do this he fails his people at the point where they need his help most sorely. And if he fails to cultivate the central soul of his people he mortgages, at the same time, those margins of the generous Over-Soul which find ultimate expression in the causes. In short, the seed of the missionary enterprise and general social zeal will never bear its hundredfold unless it falls into good ground. And the parish minister is primarily the keeper and cultivator of that soil.

The parish minister of to-day claims, therefore, the right to interpret his relation to causes philanthropic, political, industrial, denominational, in the large. He sees his people become restive under the rapid fire of drives to which they have been subjected in the years immediately past. He does not put it all down to their lethargy or selfishness. He knows them better than that. He knows that all of them are generous, that most of them are enlisted in the regular support of many causes which have come home to them with immediacy, and that many of them are giving to the point of sacrifice and beyond. But leaving finances at one side, he feels the peril of a dwindling congregation as the result of the intrusion of all this machinery into the foreground of their minds. They come to church in the patient and often dumb hope that they may find bread for a hunger at the heart of them; but, in accordance with the new Christian Year and the pressure of authority or popular opinion, he has to offer them a stone in the way of one more program to be explained and "set up." They are very patient under it all. But the Average Man is thinking of

serving an ultimatum on the minister. And the minister, being only a middleman, can merely pass this ultimatum along to those "higher up."

The modern parish minister, in all charity and with abundant good will, is about to serve notice on all parties concerned that he must be allowed to preach religion, in something of its totality, week by week, or else the denominations and the philanthropies must look for some other kind of man to do their job.

He would make perfectly clear what he means by these words. He would assure every social agency in modern society that he regards its effort as a valid and essential part of the total religious work of our time. He counts none of them secular in the sense that it is outside the moral need and duty of the day. His attitude is not one of indifference, but of concern for the whole body of organized and efficient altruism. But he must affirm that these causes have now become so numerous, and their fields of activity so specialized, that no one of them can effectively monopolize the religious spirit or offer itself as a modern equivalent for the total idea of God. He would remind some of them that they seem to him to be drifting in this direction. He sometimes feels a touch of fanaticism and bigotry about their attitude toward him, his church and the world at large. They do not realize that the last caller who left his study and the next to come are both advocates of causes as worthy as that which has the carpet for the moment, and that the minister's task is not to distract seekers after God by a multiplicity of modern attributes of God, but to try to help men to something like the total vision.

Having said this, the parish minister would go on to say that this position, to his mind, does not mean retiring again to some innocuous generalities, known as "the pure gospel." He holds out no hope to those who, for selfish reasons, would like to see the return of the happy days when the Church confined itself to religion and did not meddle with business and politics. A disgruntled parishioner of Newman's once objected that the Cardinal's preaching was interfering with the way he did business. "Sir," said Newman, "it is the business of the Church to interfere with people." The parish minister sees the Church as Newman saw it. But his interference with the world is a kind of total interference with its tempers and spirits, an effort to combat and convert irreligious

points of view, rather than a hasty attempt to arbitrate every concrete dilemma which comes along. If the parish minister of to-day claims for himself the right to preach religion as he sees it, in its totality, that religion will not be some harmless platitude or remote speculation: it will be the sum of the fundamental tempers which must enter into the making of a religious society. He merely serves notice on the world of affairs that, when he says religion, he does not mean some pale, private piety, but that he has in mind Saint Paul's description of Christianity as "dynamite," in that he is thinking about a society which nothing short of some revolution of worldly points of view will ever achieve.

Finally, the parish minister would invite those who manage the affairs of his denomination to take long views of his task and theirs. They are his representatives. He has been at times a poor constituent. He admires their fine courage in seeing a world far broader than his bailiwick. But he sometimes feels that there is too much Platonism and too little Aristotelianism about them when they approach him and his people. It is hard for them to get their vision focused as they look at the single parish and its minister. They find it relatively easy to assess the parish so much and turn the job over to him to complete. He would remind them that he cannot cry "Wolf" indefinitely. His rhetoric is limited; the sentimental touch wears out; at last he falls back upon an appeal for personal loyalty to himself.

But that process has its end, and beyond he cannot go. Moreover, he would say to his denominational representatives quite candidly that he can no more substitute the World Movement of our Denomination for the idea of God, than he can substitute the trichina or Senegambia. And that is what, at times, it seems to him that he is expected to do. Organizing teams, and appointing captains by their tens and hundreds, and fine-tooth-combing the parish once more is not necessarily having a religious experience; and the parish minister is on the ragged edge of concluding that about the quickest way to undercut the whole support of the Church-at-Large is to let its programs and machinery get into the foreground and stay there. For men will not permanently, or even long, accept as a substitute for the public worship of God a congregational committee meeting on Sunday morning to discuss in detail the blue-print plans of the New Jerusalem.

The parish minister insists upon some restoration of his ancient liberty of prophesying, not because he is indifferent, or wishes his church to be indifferent, to any and all of these claims on time, thought, service and money, but because he feels the danger of religious shortsightedness, and even of fanaticism, in the urgent clamor of these many voices. He believes that, if men can be helped to true and adequate ideas of God, godly men, to whom the task comes immediately home, will dispose of trichinosis in due time, and will maintain all other valid causes outside the Church and inside. But he fears that, if men lose the idea of God, and forget how to practice the Presence of God, the trichinae will multiply and the sects will indeed collapse, because the ruins will have been emptied for good and all, as the result of a fundamentally short-sighted conception both of the Christian Church and of the Parish Ministry.

> Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
> Heedless of far gain,
> Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
> Bad is our bargain.

It is against that bad bargain, into which it seems to him the causes and agencies have been threatening to drive him, that the parish minister is trying to warn the world and to fortify himself.

CHAPTER IX.

The Validity of the Church.

WHEN William James defined religion as the God-ward experiences of "individual men in their solitude" he seems to have intended deliberately to rule out church Christianity. He was concerned with what he called "acute religion" as against "chronic religion," and he suspected churches, not without cause, of the latter type of Christianity. "Churches," he goes on to say, "when once established live at second hand upon tradition—personal religion is the primordial thing."

There is no reasonable doubt that James's point of departure is essentially valid and right. Every great religious idea or movement in history has had its origins in the conviction of some individual man in his solitude. There is, further, no doubt that William James struck a note that needed to be sounded at an opportune moment in modern religious thought. Our world had become too gregarious, too much given to protective coloration in its idealisms, too trustful of the power of the social environment, too skeptical of the moral value of the desert and desert experiences. At least James has Plotinus on his side in the historic definition of religion as "the flight of the alone to the Alone."

Religion is the most intimate of all human experiences, therefore it always must be in some ways the most solitary. But it carries at the heart of it this paradox, that the deeper and truer the solitary experience is the more catholic it is eventually discovered to be. The moment when the prophetic soul cries, "I, even I only, am left," is the very moment when its eyes are opened to behold the unsuspected multitude of kindred spirits. Perhaps something of this sort lies hidden in those baffling words of Jesus about the words whispered in closets only to be shouted on housetops, the pitiless and splendid publicity of even the most intimate moments of religious experience.

Moreover, religion like every other great experience demands to be shared. The value of our possessions and of the items of our living may be roughly appraised by the inherent necessity of sharing them with others. The books we value, the friends we enjoy, the places we cherish, we wish others to know and to enjoy with us. Our noblest affections crave companionship that our joy may be made full. The lover who wishes you to meet and admire the beloved is an amiable nuisance whom we tolerate with an amused good will, because we know he has the real heart of the matter in him. Were he a silent recluse we should have good reason to suspect the depth and reality of his passion.

It is not otherwise with religion. The initial reaction to a religious experience is the desire to go and find the brother Simon, or the neighbor Nathanael. This compulsion to sharing, which is in all true religion, is not studied altruism, it is not even enlightened egoism, it is the spontaneous outreach of a nature grappling with a Reality too vast to be comprehended in solitude, too rich to be enjoyed alone.

From this social outreaching of the individual who in his solitude knows both the catholicity of his most personal and private transactions with God and his need of comrades that his joy may be made perfect, churches spring. Josiah Royce supplemented William James's conception of religion when he drew his pictures of the "Beloved Community" wherein our happiness and strength are found, and where our ultimate life in religion must be lived. He added, however, that he did not identify this beloved community with any sect or institution in existence, but was speaking of the Church Invisible.

Few of us can be content with James's definition of religion as a form of the "self-sufficing power of solitude." Most of us must create or realize in imagination some "Beloved Community" to which we belong. In Hardy's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" we find Angel Clare trying to teach Tess history. Tess rebels because she sees no use in learning that there were many other women like herself long ago and that there will be many more women like her hereafter; she prefers to live to herself in her ignorance. There are moments, and Tess knew them bitterly, when utter spiritual solitude is life's best and only solace. But they are not the major moments, nor are they the more frequent moments in

life. Most of us draw direct strength from a homely knowledge of our little human part in the experiences of the race as a whole, both in joy and sorrow. It is a help to realize that we are not alone. "I have often observed," says Mark Rutherford, "that the greatest help we get in time of trouble comes to us from some friend who says quite simply, 'I have endured all that.' " Now churches have their origin in this fundamental mood. Wherever there is a common spiritual experience there two or three will be gathered together. Their meeting place may be a Cave of Adullam where they gather to share their tribulations and to organize their grievances against the established order. It may be a formal cathedral where they come to voice their obvious social wants. But whatever the experience and the meeting place, where there is a community of experience in any religious concern, there by the inherent necessities of the case is a potential church.

But all this has nothing to do with the First Congregational Church on the green of a New England village, or the Baptist Meeting House in a frontier town, or the Roman Catholic mission in the slums of a great city. A mind of the austerity and wise human tolerance of Josiah Royce's mind refrains from passing any facile criticism upon these specific churches, yet it feels no spiritual connection with any such church and no moral obligation to it; while minds more caustic and impatient do not hesitate to point out the obvious contrast between the "Beloved Community" as visioned by the idealist, and the Calvary Presbyterian Church or the All Souls' Episcopal Church as managed by a session or a vestry.

The immediate problem of the Church is not that of the "Beloved Community" but of the particular congregation of the particular sect and of the sum of all such concrete particulars. To the abstract idea most men will give theoretical consent. To an inner experience of the Invisible Church the few will always rise. But when men talk of "the Church" they usually mean the average parish machinery and building to be found on the next corner. And it is this institution which is in their minds when they undertake either to criticize or to defend the Christian Church.

That all is not well inside those four walls is a commonplace observation which has lost both its poignancy and its pungence. The sport of church-baiting no longer has any terrors for the

object of the attack or any zest for the attackers themselves. Ministers and church members have long since become so familiar with all the permutations and combinations of criticism against the Church that the future has nothing new to offer them. And as for the critics, the day is long gone when a man is in danger of outlawing himself from good society or any other society because of his caustic strictures on the Church.

It would be a healthy thing for contemporary Christianity if this same parish church occasionally took a hand at criticism and attempted to give some account of itself. What is this average church doing to justify its existence? What is its real function in our time? Why should men belong to it and support it?

At the very outset there is one type of criticism which the Church is perfectly justified in ruling out of court. This is the criticism coming from men and women who have no real understanding of religion and who care nothing about it. The Church must believe in the fundamental goodness of these persons, their salvability. It is the main business of the Church to try to make just such persons care about religion. But, for the moment, their wholesale criticism of the Church springs from a dull materialistic view of life, unrelieved by any idealism.

There is no reason why we should take too seriously the snap judgment on the Christian Church passed by a man whose idea of human happiness is to see a high-priced baseball player knock a home run into the right field bleachers. The baseball bleachers are certainly out of touch with the Church, or as it is more often put, the Church is out of touch with the bleachers. But so are the bleachers out of touch with all the nobler efforts and achievements of the human mind, out of touch with art galleries and libraries and symphony concerts, out of touch with Rodin, Francis Thompson and Tschaikowsky. The home run to the bleachers has its place in the economy of human joy and sorrow, but the bleachers are not the judgment seat from which to pass on the final values of human life, or the mountain top from which the Vision of Reality is best achieved.

It is not at all surprising that the man who knows far more about the life history of Mutt and Jeff than he knows about the life of Jesus of Nazareth finds the Church dull and uninteresting, and the day's lesson from the gospels dry. It is not surprising that

young men and women whose main passion in life is to keep abreast of the musical comedies and to go the pace in modern dances find the Church stupid, the stately hymns of Christendom stale after the syncopation of the jazz band, the somber reflections of Job uninteresting beside the patter of the comedienne. It is not surprising that women who devour the social gossip of the Sunday paper with scrupulous devotion, but who never heard of Mary of Bethany, do not see the use of going to church.

There is no fallacy in the whole logic of contemporary religious thinking so great as the fallacy which argues from the half truth that "the common people heard him gladly" to the conclusion that the common people would fill the churches if only the churches were simple, natural and very real. It was those same "common people" who a day or so later howled in Pilate's court for Jesus' death and then jeered around his cross.

The Church must humbly confess her known faults and scrupulously search her corporate life and practice for the unsuspected faults, but there is absolutely no assurance that when she has set her own house in order she will come into instant popularity. The teaching of history cuts all in the other direction. Passionate and prophetic souls have enjoyed from time to time a brief flood tide of popular acclaim and success, but so soon as the crowd saw where they were being led and what was being asked of them they turned back again to those Egyptian flesh pots which have always been the meat and drink of that baffling creature, "the man in the street." The average church may be a rather perfunctory and lifeless institution but on the whole it compares favorably with that stumblingblock on which all idealisms in history finally trip, the man in the street.

Shaw reminds us that there is no error in social analysis so false to the facts as that which crudely divides the world into religious and irreligious persons. He says that there are in every generation a handful of passionately religious persons and a smaller number of actively irreligious persons; one Wesley and his small following, one Tom Paine and his smaller following, and between these extremes the great mass of healthy Philistines who eat, drink and are merry, who marry and are given in marriage—whose life, in short, is a matter of finding attractive mates, making money and having "a good time."

All this by way of saying that those who carry the burdens and problems of the Christian Church upon their hearts and minds are not to take too seriously the strictures upon the modern Church which have their origins in a candidly materialistic view of life. The chaplains and Y. M. C. A. workers in both the British and American forces have published considerable volumes embodying their deductions and conclusions as to the religion of the average man. These volumes abound with the hackneyed criticism of churches—"dull, pedantic, unreal, insincere, out of date." But these criticisms rest on the plain fact that the man in the street, i.e., 80 to 85 per cent of him, is not religious in any vital sense of the word. And it is a perfectly fair question whether the classes whose idea of Sunday is two full rounds of golf, or the masses whose idea of Sunday is an aimless, idle self-indulgence at a raucous seashore resort are in a moral position to pass any valuable criticism on Christianity, institutional or otherwise. These persons are not to be regarded as the final appraisers of the Church but rather as its challenge and its opportunity. They are the basis of the sober conclusion of the American chaplains that "America is not a Christian country in any strict sense of the word; it is a mission field."

We come, on the other hand, to that residuum of the very real and entirely warranted criticism of the Church which has its origin in thoughtful and self-sacrificing lives. There is always in history a minority of passionate and prophetic spirits whose personal zeal and devotion outruns the chronic religion of the churches, who would like to belong to the Church if they could do so with a good conscience, but whose sincerity and ardor chafe at the formalism and lethargy of the average church. These persons are troubled about the state of the Church and their own relation to it. Young men are loath to enter the ministry because they feel that the Church is cabin'd, cribb'd and confined, and that through it they will not find the opportunities they crave for sincere intellectual and ethical self-expression and service. Everywhere in our cities there are scholars, artists, reformers and social servants who are deeply interested in religion, who crave the social expression of religion, and yet cannot bring themselves to work in and through the Church. To these persons and to their case for the prosecution the Church must give serious heed, and it must

have some adequate answer to give to their criticism if it is to win their steadily increasing numbers.

As to the temper of the criticism, we should realize at the outset that criticism from this source has its origin in a deep faith in the Church as a potential if not an actual embodiment of Christianity. It is precisely because men have such high ideals for the Church, because they feel so deeply what she ought to be and might be, that they are so pained and perplexed by what she is. They criticize the Church not because they are indifferent to her, but because they love her and have no other desire for her than that she achieve the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Moreover, this sober and significant criticism springs from a newly awakened Christian conscience. The deadliest moral opiate which can fasten, as a habit, on any man or institution, is the dull habit of content which has numbed the pain of the divine discontent and stopped all questionings. The awakened conscience of our time which no longer takes the conventional church for granted is fighting for the living soul of religion itself. And even though it be a long and painful process to throw off the moral drug habit of inert acquiescence, this ferment of the true conscience is an immediate gain for Christianity and an ultimate gain for churches.

Ferrero, the Italian historian, made a visit to America some years ago, at the time when our papers and magazines were filled with the muckraking researches into municipal politics. "The Shame of the Cities" was on all lips. Ferrero had read these criticisms and came to America expecting to find the civic morals of this country debauched beyond anything that history had ever known. To his perplexity and astonishment he found the average American city living its life and conducting its municipal business on a moral level far higher than he had anticipated. In many cases he thought American cities politically cleaner and better run than the cities of Europe. For a time he was utterly unable to square the facts with the theory, until he realized that the old Puritan conscience, long dead in most of Europe, was still alive and functioning in America, that moral vices and political abuses which had been tolerated so long in Europe that they had ceased to awaken criticism any longer, still troubled the American con-

science. And he went back to Europe writing down "The Shame of the Cities" to the credit of American public morals. Now precisely the same fact holds true of all the serious criticism of the modern Church. That we can and do criticize and accept criticism of the Church is, even for institutional religion, a moral asset and not a moral liability. The forward-moving times in Christian history have not been the ages when criticism of the Church was absent, they have been precisely those times when criticism was most active and outspoken, both within and without. The great Catholic orders, which in succession purified Catholicism, the Reformation itself, the subsequent revolts within the reformed churches, were the constructive critical movements by which Christianity as a whole has been advanced. In short, in every vital epoch of Christian history, rebuke of the Church has abounded, and such ages have eventually proved themselves to be the creative ages. The temper of sober criticism is, therefore, seen in full historical perspective, perhaps the most hopeful sign on the contemporary religious horizon.

Again, we must realize that all this criticism directed against the Church is simply a single aspect of a far wider problem, perhaps the major problem of the present time, the relation of the moral freeman to the fixed institution. The question which the thoughtful man faces to-day is not the mere question of his relation to the Church as such; that is simply one item and aspect of the far wider problem of his relation to all institutionalism, to the State, to universities, to industries. The problem, "Why go to Church?" is of the same piece of cloth as the question, "Why go to College?" for colleges are turning out academic products no less conventional and hall-marked than the normal human output of churches. The query, "Why join a Church?" is of the same fabric as the query, "Why join a political party?" for political parties are as hidebound and artificial as religious sects. What the man of to-day is really thinking through is the total problem of his relation to all institutions.

There has appeared recently an appraisal of the work of one of the major departments of a great American university, written by a professor in that institution. He says that the world at large feels toward himself and his colleagues a contemptuous indifference. The universities are said to be out of touch with actual life,

they unfit men for active life, they breed academic pedants and social snobs. If the reader were to run through the indictment and substitute the word Church for the word University, the text would stand as it is, as the familiar criticism of the Church. If there are men and women out of patience with the churches to-day, the same persons are out of patience with our whole educational system, from the kindergarten through the professional post-graduate school. The colleges have to face, to-day, indictments of their corporate life as sweeping and drastic as anything visited upon churches. Likewise our modern political and industrial machinery, our courts of law, our legislatures and our hereditary parties, our arbitrary capitalism and our equally arbitrary labor unionism, are all being subjected to the searching reëxamination of the free mind. What irks us is not institutional Christianity alone, but all institutionalism with the formality and generally mediocre level of attainment which is implied in the very nature of an institution. It is the doctrine of the inglorious moral mean by which institutions live that arouses the resentment and ardor of the freeman.

When we come to the larger problem of the validity of any institution, whether it be Church or State, a college, a political party or a labor union, we are face to face with one of the most difficult questions in human history. Emerson said, "An institution is the lengthened shadow of a great man." The contrast between the live man and the thin and lifeless shadow always gives rise to the critical temper. It was said that Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other end of the log constituted a university. But Mark Hopkins was not immortal and the students crowded their end of the log and Williams College is the result. Whether Williams College of to-day, with its faculty and student body and conventional classrooms, is as effective a medium for the truth, as complete an incarnation of the idea of education, as Mark Hopkins, the single student and the mutual log is a perfectly debatable question. The practical problem is not how to make Mark Hopkins immortal but what to do when nature in due time removes him from the log. Are he and his ideas to perish with him, or are they to be perpetuated in the lengthened shadow which still rests as a college on the Berkshire Hills?

Any one of us would rather have for a suit of clothes a piece

of Irish homespun woven on the hand looms in the cottages of Donegal, with the bits of heather still uncombed from the fleece, than the best piece of woolen goods turned out of an American mill. But there are not looms enough or cottagers enough in Donegal to clothe us as we should like to be clothed, and the actual option is going unclothed or taking the product of the woolen mill. No one of us, save in moments of election frenzy, really identifies his political party with the fathers and founders of his country and its succession of political idealists. We do not monopolize the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution for our brand of vote. Our parties are always something less than the original and true idea of democracy. Yet the practical option the citizen faces is the choice of the best party available, whatever its obvious limitations, or the entire frustration of his citizenship.

The problem which the religious man faces in his relation to the Church is qualitatively identical with these other concrete problems of his wider life. The absolute identification of the Church with Christ must always savor either of arrogance or ignorance. Churches which make such claims for themselves lay themselves open to fair criticism. The mind of the average sect is by no means the mind of Christ, nor is the life of the average church to be compared with the simplicity and spiritual purity of Jesus' original comradeship with his disciples. Just in so far as Mark Hopkins and his single student sitting together on the log was a simpler and more adequate incarnation of the idea of education than the subsequent college, just so far were Jesus and his disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration a better and fuller expression of what we mean by the Christian religion than the subsequent parish church of any given sect. There is at least that much truth in the theory that the Golden Age of the gospel was the primitive age.

The case for any and every institution in history is a debatable case as against the case for the absolutely free man. The free man is always the historical first cause of every institution. He seldom senses in his own lifetime the organization which is to grow up around his name and work. His part as the author of an institution is more often unconscious than conscious. But we are entirely within the bounds of historical truth when we speak of him as a historical cause of institutions. The case of Jesus and the Church is no exception to this general rule. There is little reason to sup-

pose that Jesus deliberately intended to establish a new institution in history. Jesus belonged essentially to the order of the prophets, and the prophetic mind has no interest in ecclesiasticism for its own sake. But the Church is both an inevitable and a valid consequence of the life of Jesus. Thus we may speak, broadly, of Jesus as the author of our faith and the founder of the Christian Church.

But what the Church together with all other institutions so often forgets is the fact that the free man is also its final cause. If Jesus was the author of our faith he is also to be its finisher, and Christlike characters in their liberty are the ends which churches exist to realize. The peril which attends the life of the Church is the peril that in this cycle from an initial freedom to an ultimate freedom the process shall be arrested, and the institution shall come to regard itself as its own end. This is, as a matter of simple fact, the moral weakness of nine tenths of our organized Christianity. Churches and churchmen treat the institution as the center of values and alienate to themselves the spiritual worth which attaches only to free men. When Kant said that one of the signs of true morality is the habit of treating men as ends in themselves, he passed judgment on all sorts and conditions of modern institutions which are too prone to treat men as means to their own ends. The Prussian theory of the State is the extreme perversion of the only valid doctrine as to the relation of men and institutions. But Prussianizing tendencies have communicated themselves to many non-Prussian quarters, and it is seldom that stress is laid to-day upon the fact that states, churches and the like exist "for the people."

In some ways those words of Jesus about the Sabbath are the most revolutionary utterance in the gospels. They lay the axe squarely at the root of all institutionalism which has usurped the historical privileges and priority of the freeman. That saying of Jesus is capable of almost infinite restatement, and indeed, to be fully understood, must be translated into its widest and farthest implications. Men were not made to belong to states, to join churches, to subscribe to sacred literatures, to recite creeds, to tend machines. All these are made for man's own ends. When the ecclesiastical, political or industrial machine precedes the freeman in history it reverses the true order of moral values. Most modern

institutions, however, churches included, are very reluctant to admit that Jesus was right in his flat dictum that these social devices were made for man. And too often, when they sense this attitude in the freeman, they follow Jerusalem and Rome in suppressing him as guilty of heresy and treason.

The ecclesiastic must always be puzzled and dismayed by the prophetic assurance that "there is no church in heaven." Such a heaven, to the "high-church" mind will be a place shorn of all earth's dearest interests and tasks. With the Church abolished there will be nothing for the ecclesiastic to do. But the freeman will understand this prophecy because he will not hesitate to apply to the Church the standard by which he measures all institutions. The best and most effective institution in history is that which aims to fulfill and supplant itself by free men. The far-seeing institution, in the forerunner's spirit, is willing to decrease just in so far as its mission is realized by an increase of true liberty. Canon Barnett used to say that no philanthropy ought to exist as an organized effort for more than twenty years. If it is an efficient institution it will have realized its particular end in that time. If the end remains unrealized, it would seem that the institution has become more concerned with keeping up its own organization than with serving the world, and it had best dissolve. On this principle he once said that his highest ambition for Toynbee Hall was that it might become unnecessary. The highest ambition which any churchman can have for the historical Church is that it may become unnecessary. If he really stands in the right relation to religion he looks with great desire for the coming of those days of which the Lord saith: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me." John Tauler says, somewhere, that the holiest man he ever knew had never heard more than six sermons in his life. When he had heard these sermons and saw how the matter stood with him he went and did as the preacher said and the matter ended there. It is because so few members of the congregation take the offices of the Church directly and wholly to heart that churches and ministers still have a work to do. A race of men like Tauler's friend would empty and close the churches inside two months! But that would be the millennium,

for such is the heavenly end every true Christian institution desires.

Meanwhile, in the historic cycle from initial freedom to ultimate freedom, institutions do serve a necessary and entirely valid place in our life.* Whatever may be said against them, this must be said in their defense, they are the storehouses of human experience in its totality. Into them is gathered the cumulative wisdom of the race. The harvesting is done broadly and crudely. The tares are not always separated from the wheat. The institution always garners the total yield of history, both for better and for worse. Yet the institution does save each oncoming generation from the tedious necessity of having to begin its life all over again. It enables the newcomer on the human scene to take up the task where his predecessor laid it down. "Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors," is the legend over the threshold of all institutions. Here is the sum of the experience of man in society in his unremitted venture of trial and error. The institution is not only the symbol of the continuity of human experience, it is the very stuff and fabric of that continuity, which gives reality and meaning to the time process.

The case for the Church, then, must stand or fall with the case for all institutionalism. Its central problems and mission cannot be dissociated from the wider considerations which attach to the validity of political, educational, economic and industrial organizations. None of these social machines is entirely adequate as the medium for freedom in its particular field. All of them tend to forget the liberty which at the first inspired them and the true freedom which they exist to realize. The case against the Church as it fails to incarnate the free spirit of Christ is precisely the case against the state which fails to measure up to the ideal of democracy, the college which falls short of all truth, the mill which does not shelter free and happy workmen.

In one of the most suggestive passages in recent religious literature,† Professor Hocking combats the theory that religion in history can be defended on any utilitarian basis, and ventures the suggestion that religion is not a "useful" but a "fertile" principle, whose major function is a perpetual parentage. He points out the

* See "Human Nature and Its Remaking," W. E. Hocking, pp. 177-225.

† "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," pp. 11-26.

perfectly plain fact that practically every one of the modern arts had its origin in a religious inspiration. Painting, sculpture, poetry, law, music, teaching, social service—all of them are the direct offspring of religion. And he raises the question whether the case for religion must not rest upon what Tyrrell calls this "divine fecundity" rather than upon the pragmatic test of efficiency at any given moment.

Some such parallel may be made in the case of the religious institution as well as the religious idea. Hocking likens religion to the queen bee. There is a similar illustration which may serve as a symbol in the case of the Church. Biology is familiar in some of the lower orders of life with the phenomenon of alternating generations. There is, for example, a species of jellyfish which lives in such a cycle. One generation is made up of free-swimming individuals ranging as wide as the limits of the sea itself. The offspring of this generation fastens at once to the sea bottom and lives there a permanent, sessile, plantlike life, never moving from its rooted place. But this fixed generation in due time buds off from its stock a further generation which finally breaks away from the sessile parent and becomes the free-swimming type.

The life of man in society is essentially a succession of alternating generations. The free man ranges through the world at his own will. But his historical successors settle down in history and become fixed around his memory and tradition as an institution. This fixed institution, however, in due time develops and finally buds off other free men who break away, remove themselves from the parent stock and become in turn the founders of still other institutions in society. Why this should be so is hard to say. How the ends of man's life in society and the longer purposes of history are served better by this baffling economy than by uninterrupted generations of free men is a problem that defies any cheap and easy solution.

The value of this cycle of alternating generations in the spiritual life of the race may lie in the fact that freedom is so costly and evanescent an achievement that its successive advances can be made permanently good to the race only by periods of arrest in institutions. Saint Augustine, in his "City of God," ventures to criticize the tedious and painful process by which human beings come to birth and says he would have ordered better had he been

the Creator. One may criticize the social processes whereby free men are born into society only after gestation within the sessile institutions. But the fact is plain, and meanwhile the purposes of God are served in their own way by the existing methods.

To wipe the slate clean of all institutions, to propose to eradicate from the history of ongoing freedom its alternate generations of institutional fixity is not to usher in the millennium. As history stands this is simply to open the doors to old chaos come again. The institution gives opportunity for mental and moral assimilation of the fruits of freedom. It is the chance for the pragmatist and the utilitarian, which otherwise they would not have. Moreover, the institution furnishes the soil of discipline from which further forms of freedom are to spring. The freest souls in Christian history have not been those nihilist natures who escaped or evaded the discipline of life within the formal institution. They have always been those men who learned of the Church of their own day all that she had to teach, and who transcended her in their own final freedom only when they had exhausted her resources.

Jesus is the outstanding example of this principle. We more and more tend to regard him as the full flower and fruit of Judaism, not as a "sport" or "freak of nature" in the spiritual history of the race. His final matchless freedom rested upon a full initial submission to Judaism, a discriminating jealousy for the true value of the jot and the tittle, which on the basis of any other explanation is absolutely unintelligible. The gospels have little or no meaning apart from the law and the prophets. To isolate them as spontaneous manifestations of religion is to make the liberty of Christ an accident, not a normal historical reality. Paul stands in like case. He had to be a good Pharisee in order to become a good Christian. The free spirit of Christ would have had no meaning for him had he not drained the moral resources of the law to their very end. The eighth chapter of Romans could never have been written had not Paul passed clean through the disciplines recorded in the prior seventh chapter. Martin Luther had given the Roman doctrine of salvation by works full and fair trial in his Augustinian days, and it was just this moral drudgery of the monastery which led him on finally to his characteristic doctrine of salvation by faith.

The Church, or something like the Church, seems to be historically necessary as a foil to religious anarchy and as the source and exciting occasion for a disciplined freedom. It is a perfectly fair question whether there would have been any permanent increment of Christian liberty down the centuries were it not for the sessile sects which always awaken the hunger for liberty, and within which the rudiments of the fuller freedom are always conceived. Bernard, Francis, Wycliff, Huss, the Reformers, Fox, Wesley, Emerson, Tolstoi, stand in Christian history as radiant apostles of religious liberty at its best, but their freedom had its uniform origin in a full discipline within the formal ecclesiasticism of their own times. The free man in religious history always excites our admiration. We recognize him as the fulfillment of the spiritual aim of history, an earnest of what all religious men finally are to be. But in our preoccupation with his mature freedom we too often ignore his prior history as a member of some specific church, which mediated to him the Christian tradition as a whole, and was his point of spiritual departure.

To the practical question, How long ought a man to remain a member of a church with which he does not find himself in entire accord? the historical answer is perfectly plain, "As long as he possibly can." For if he consults merely his own spiritual future, to say nothing of possible service to the religious idea, his freedom will be better disciplined and more full of meaning if he does not hasten his departure. It must have been this perception of the mediate value of the institution, even when it irked him most, which led George Tyrrell to insist that he would stay in the Roman Church as long as he could. "I uphold the duty of each man to stay within and work for his own household as long as he conscientiously can. . . . I will do nothing unnecessarily to procure my own excommunication, and when it happens I will stand on the doorstep and knock and ring and make myself a nuisance in every way." To be a Francis or a Wycliff or a Wesley is an entirely legitimate ideal for every Christian. Such a destiny will always mean some measure of schism with the Church that now is. But men never have come and never will come to these hours of prophetic freedom through deliberate and persistent neglect of the existing Church. Only the man who knows the Church of to-day through and through, and who has exhausted her

resources, can lead the way to the Church of to-morrow. That Church of to-morrow will never be achieved by those who ignore the corporate continuity of Christian experience. If it is to come at all, it will be the final achievement of sincere and earnest men now in the Church.

The Church is a human institution, of divine origin and of divine destiny if we will have it so, but at the present moment as fallible and as far short of its author and finisher as are all these kindred groups. If the Church seems a less perfect social mechanism than the others, that is merely because the gospel of Christ is so much more absolute and austere an ideal than the ends served by avowedly secular institutions. The flaws of all institutionalism are more patent in the case of the Church than elsewhere because the contrast between Christ and the Church is more glaring than the contrasts between the Declaration of Independence and the Congress of the United States, or between Mark Hopkins's log and the average Williams College lecture room. The Church always has been the first institution to fall, and always will be the first to fall, under the condemnation of the free spirit, not because she is an exception to an otherwise adequate and perfect adjustment of human institutions to their ideal ends, but because she is the most patent illustration of a problem that is all but universal in human history. She is the stock example of the inevitable perils of all institutional life. But qualitatively the problems which surround her life are of the same stuff as those which attend the political state, the modern profession with its fixed traditions, the orthodox bank and the orthodox labor union.

The awakened Christian Church will not shirk the criticisms which may be fairly passed upon her corporate life. She will not attempt to deny the discrepancy between the gospel idea in its original and ultimate purity and her faith and practice at any given moment in her history. The consciousness of that contrast is the seat of the divine discontent whereby the half-gods are dethroned. But the Church has a perfect right to insist that men shall have a fine and total consistency in their attitude toward her. She asks that this age shall not isolate her problem as one unique in the modern world, but that it shall treat her case as part of the total problem of our civilization, that if men abandon her because they elect the absolute religious idea as against the

historically imperfect and conditioned institution, they shall follow this logic to its conclusions in their relation to all the other major institutions in modern life, and live as hermits apart from all the imperfect social machinery by which the ideas of justice, knowledge, health and the like are served. The man who refuses to have anything to do with the Church because it does not measure up to the fullness of the stature of Christ, but who blindly votes his party ticket every election day, who runs in the deep, narrow rut of his profession, and generally serves as a buttress for the dull conventions of the present order, lives in a house divided against itself, and is a contradiction in moral terms. The true Church will never gainsay the really free and prophetic spirit in history. She will not prosecute Abraham Lincoln because he could not join her. She has, however, a moral right to some impatience and distrust of those lesser souls who are always caviling at the motes in her eye, but who never sense the beam in their own eye which blinds them to their slavish devotion to all other modern institutions. The Church asks of right-minded men, not that they shall cease their criticism of her, but that they shall give to her that discriminating and creative loyalty which they owe to the other major institutions of our age. The only logical alternative is a total social nihilism, a lonely hut on Walden Pond, a lodge in the desert, the self-sufficing power of an absolutely consistent solitude.

CHAPTER X.

The Work of the Church in the World of To-day.

TOWARD the end of his spiritual Odyssey, George Tyrrell said, "God will not ask us, What sort of Church have you lived in? but, What sort of Church have you longed for?" Every Christian in the modern world is entitled to the solace of the homely conviction that in the matter of churches, as in the matter of character, what he aspires to be is a truer indication of his real nature than that which he has thus far achieved. The many sects are, at the best, broken lights of the Holy Church Universal, which is more than they.

Membership in any given parish or communion is for all thoughtful men to-day simply an arbitrary expression of the working will to be on the creative rather than the critical side of the issue.

> Meantime in the still recurring fear
> Lest myself at unawares be found,
> While attacking the choice of my neighbours round,
> With none of my own made—I choose here!

For every candid man realizes that under present conditions the "torch for burning" is a much easier tool to master and to use than "the hammer for building." However much a man may be stirred by the rebel temper, and however deeply he may be troubled by the divine discontent, he knows in his soberer moments that the Kingdom of God will never be fashioned by a wrecking gang.

The deeper peril of the whole critical temper which permeates so much of the liberalism and latitudinarianism of our time is its neglect of the creative capacity of the human soul. We live, to-day,

as a keen observer tells us, on a certain "Devil's Island," where most men are attempting to reach reality by way of negation.

"They make the images of their gods in Devil's Island, not by the process of filling them in, but by the contrary process of hollowing them out. That is to say, having cut the form out of the matter, they throw the form away and worship the hole that is left by its removal. They had an instrument designed for the purpose. This instrument was a wonderful tool, and it was said that the mightiest brains of Devil's Island had spent three thousand years in bringing it to perfection. It was guaranteed to tear the inside out of anything whether living or dead, and, being made of all conceivable sizes and powers, was equally effectual for driving a shaft through mountains of granite or taking the core out of a grain of dust. When at work it made an ear-splitting, heart-rending noise. There was something in the sound which reminded one of an extremely harsh human voice saying 'no' at the rate of twenty 'noes' per second.

Thus in the course of time the whole island came to be hollowed out in a manner which not only rendered walking extremely dangerous, but demanded excessive care in respect to everything one touched. The objects which stood above ground had to be treated in the same manner as those which lay beneath, so that you could never push aside the branch of a tree or remove a pebble from the beach, without the risk of disturbing some artistic enclosure of empty space and thereby displacing the pediment of a temple or breaking the nose of a god.

During my sojourn on Devil's Island I became a fanatical convert to the cult of Hollowness. We never spoke of explanation. The term by which we indicated that process was 'dismissal.' We congratulated one another on the advent of the age of enlightenment, in which, as we said, everything has either been triumphantly dismissed or has received notice to quit. Knowledge was described as the Incoming Tenant, to provide for whose arrival everything in the universe was under Notice to Quit. The act of Quitting, we said, took place in Time, but the Notice to Quit was eternal.

I well remember an article in the *Times* of Devil's Island for 31st December of a certain year in which it was proudly claimed

that during the past twelve months a large number of fresh holes had appeared in the substance of Reality owing to the splendid labors of Professor So-and-So; and no higher honour was ever paid to a Devil's Islander than that contained in the simple epitaph which a few years later was engraved on this man's tomb:

> He drove his ploughshare into the Bowels of Being;
> He tunnelled the Universe;
> He found a Fact, and left a Vacuum.
> *Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice."**

The *via negativa* may be the strait gate and the narrow way that leads to reality. The business of dispossessing unlovely fact, of making a desert and calling it peace, is for certain austere types of mind the sole arduous trail to reality. But this way of negation is also the broad, high road to Pharisaism, and many there be who follow it, unconsciously, to that end. In addition to the two types we noted in the previous chapter, the sodden materialist and the prophetic revolutionary, there is a third group which complicates the problem of the present-day Church. Unlike their predecessors in the "intellectual" tradition these folk no longer carry drafts of the Utopia in their vest pockets—they carry Notices to Quit. They wander freely about history and society like billposters, pasting their eviction orders on the doors and walls of all our major institutions. The notices to quit are printed wholesale and may be had for a little cheap thinking at any radical headquarters, the sticky paste of a sentimental pessimism is easily mixed and the inviting walls of past and present achievement are many and garish. But these activities, under present conditions, recruit most of their force from the unskilled labor of the human mind, and are hardly more than once removed from intellectual unemployment.

Every city minister recognizes the type and can anticipate its reaction to his institution. There is a certain nomad group which roams around aimlessly from church to church to confirm its own grievances. These folk will descend like the locust in response to an occasional suggestion of critical pessimism, but they vanish like the morning dew whenever they are summoned to creative effort. They have developed a mental and moral flair for the dry rot in the pulpit and the structural flaws in the masonry of the

* L. P. Jacks, "The Alchemy of Thought," pp. 138 ff.

Church, but they have no power to see beyond this obvious "decay and ceaseless down-rushing of the universal World-fabric from the granite mountain to the man or day-moth." They have become constitutionally unable to lift the quarry stone and to cleave the green wood to fashion the future of the City of God.

Confront such a mind with a cathedral, and its major interest is not in the aspirations and ardors of the mediaeval builder, but in his structural blunders and makeshifts. This mind has no eye for the beauties of the Galilee at Durham, because it is preoccupied with the damning discovery that the pillars of the nave are not solid masonry but are filled with rubble. This mind thinks it has found the distinctive glory of Rochester when it learns, with holy glee, that the foundations of that cathedral were laid, centuries ago, in a marsh, that the whole fabric has since settled and has had to be refortified in these latter years by divers working in the subterranean mud, burying bags of concrete around and beneath the imperfect work of the past.

This familiar type defines itself ecclesiastically, in accordance with the dominant temper of the time, not by the Church it longs for, but by the Church it has left. Like the Athenian dilettanti, it will always crowd up to Mars' Hill to hear some new thing, particularly if there is the prospect of the tart acid of negation. But it will invariably leave before the collection is taken for the saints in Jerusalem. The thing has become a kind of ecclesiastical vagrancy, pure and simple, without any inherent power to fashion that which it holds to be the foil to present failure.

The old, neglected words of Jesus about judging not that we be not judged come home to the present age with the fresh validity given them by the dominant critical temper of our time. Censoriousness soon destroys all kindly human relationships. Criticism, when it becomes the fixed intellectual and moral habit of a society, inhibits the life of faith. Faith is the giving of substance to things hoped for, the demonstration of that which is as yet unseen and unrealized, a man's share in the nature and toil of God. By faith the worlds were framed. By faith men become fellow heirs with Jesus who said of himself, "The Father worketh even until now and I work." The detached attitude of the critic, his self-appointed place outside the effort of history and above the battle are his forfeit of faith. He invites toward himself the

indifference which he assumes toward others. He obstructs the whole creative process in history when criticism pure and simple becomes his only pathway to reality.

We need nothing so much in the life of the modern Church as a correction of the major critical temper which is actually inhibiting the faith of the Church. If men would devote themselves for a generation to an undivided contemplation of the Church they long for rather than a caustic condemnation of the Church they live in or have left, the Church of the middle of the twentieth century could not be recognized as the issue of the Church which now is. If we could only restore the mood which fashioned the Virgin of Chartres we should not be driven with Henry Adams to the dynamo as the only contemporary religious equivalent. For the mood was one of ineffable and pregnant longing.

To single out, by way of conclusion to the whole matter, one aspect of the potential Church of our deepest desire, an aspect which is neither unintelligible nor remotely impracticable,—the Church we long for will be a Holy Catholic Church. There is no point at which the churches that now are fall farther short of the desired reality than in their racial, social, temperamental provincialism. In this respect Protestantism is the greatest offender.

There has been much gain for religion in the Protestant vindication of the plain man's right to believe in God and to worship God in his own vernacular. Protestantism in idea is a perpetual Pentecost in which each man may hear the good news in his own tongue. But Pentecost without an initial and sustaining experience of real religion soon and easily degenerates into Babel, a hopeless confusion of the corporate aim and effort. Conversely, Romanism has maintained a spurious catholicity under the dull, leaden incubus of mediaeval Latin and all that that means. The Thomasian mind still serves in a fashion to express the religion of "all men, everywhere, always," in the sense that it no longer expresses the spiritual life of any particular man anywhere. It is the night in which all cows are black, and in so far forth seems still to achieve a certain catholicity. But the actual fact is that there is no Holy Church Universal in the world of to-day. Romanism still makes claim to that Unity on the basis of dogmas and liturgies which serve as well as any other as a meeting place for men who say, "*Credimus quia impossibile est.*" Protestantism, in practice, is simply the

ecclesiastical sanction for birds of a feather to foregather and breed in their particular island of Arctic isolation.

The most interesting church venture which has been attempted in our time is that of the Roman Catholic modernist, who as a historical fact has now been ruled out of court. The thing he was after is the thing we all want. Perhaps he was the forerunner of some genuinely Christlike Church-to-be. Certainly he aimed to combine the intellectual and ethical liberty of the Protestant with the Roman experience of catholicity. That he failed was the fault and the tragedy of Rome. But he found even in Romanism a shadow of the reality which every lover of the Church desires, and that shadow was actually cast by the invisible reality.

Religion may be defined as the experience of communion or union with God. There are rare natures who in rare moments are given this experience in its ineffable simplicity and totality. But both the temperament which is capable of this mystical rapture and the times and seasons of the experience itself are beyond our human control. And a practical mysticism, which is what the present age needs above all else, will seek to suggest the nature of religion by the homely intimations to be drawn from life in the market place, rather than from the ineffable transactions of those who have finally found themselves "in the desert of the Godhead."

The business of the Church is to persuade men of their actual union with God through the life of faith and conduct. Contemporary Christianity ought to be a dawning and maturing experience of personal identity with the Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe. No clue to that experience is too homely or trivial to be followed to its destination in God. That is what the life of affection and friendship ultimately means. That is what the solace and serenity of nature suggest. That is where the comradeship of human service leads. Religion is this overwhelming sense of Oneness, suggested and mediated to us by the rich and varied interests of daily life. If all ancient roads led to Rome, so all right and honorable ways of modern life ought to lead to God. And the major task of the Christian Church is not only to make that simple affirmation, but to achieve the actual experience in its noblest and most adequate form, primarily through the offices of public worship.

The tragedy of modern life rests very largely on the fact that the centrifugal and divisive forces are so many and so powerful and the centripetal energy so weak. The increasing pace of competition in business, professional and political life is constantly hurling small groups of men and detached individuals off onto the solitary tangents of their own pursuits. A tremendous case can be made for the loneliness of modern life. Under present conditions distinction and success seem to offer only at the end of intensive specialization. The utility man on the ball team, the jack of all trades in industry and the general practitioner in professional life have more points of contact with the world than has the specialist. Their human rewards, their actual pleasure in the game of life, may be greater than his. But given such a world as we now have, opportunity beckons down the trail of specialization.

Any man who has stepped off the highway of general human concern to follow one of these trails knows something of the lost feeling involved in the adventure. The summons to independence of mind which comes with all the intensive research work of the modern world is also a summons to solitude. The intellectual pioneer must leave the country of accredited knowledge and the companionship of kindred minds and go out into the unknown.

> Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
> Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!

The explorer knows that the adventure is its own reward.

> My price was paid me ten times over by my Maker.
> But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy.

But there are hours when the typical freeman of our day is burdened by the heavy oppression of his detachment and remoteness from the common mind. What was for the pioneering type once a thing of physical geography, has now become a matter of spiritual realities. The man who is blazing a trail along some single line into the primeval wilderness of human ignorance will never complain that life is without its zest. But he must miss the heartening companionship of his human kind.

Freedom, then, in the distinctive and significant labors of our own time, carries with it a certain disintegrating principle which is constantly resolving the social whole into its units. The more

independent a man is and the farther he has carried his task as a specialist, the wider the gap which opens between himself and his fellows. So far as the private professional compensations for living are concerned, life abundant is to be found on these trails. But, at the outset certainly, they lead away from the more obvious forms of the experience of catholicity.

The deeper and more difficult task of the Christian Church is concerned with the closing of these gaps in the modern world. Religion has no interest to recall the freeman from his pioneering labors. Indeed, for the pioneer the whole initial half of personal religion must lie in the exercise of this liberty of mind apart from all ecclesiastical leading strings. It is vain to try to persuade the serious men and women of our day, who are doing the creative work of the human mind by perfecting themselves in their particular and distinctive fields, that religion ought to impose or can rightly impose any limits upon their research. Religion for the biologist must be, before all else, a matter of thinking God's thoughts after him, in the life history of the liver-fluke. No crusader, kneeling naked in a night-long vigil before a candle-lighted altar in a gloomy cathedral, has ever established historical claim to a religiousness denied the modern astronomer who through the hours of darkness, the world forgetting and by the world forgot, follows some freshly visioned nebula across the heavens with his hundred-inch telescope.

So, in the less specialized areas of human knowledge and labor, where there is a measure of comradeship, the Church cannot persuade the distinctive social and professional groups that religion demands any denial of their native human loyalty. The Church cannot expect the artisan to resign from his labor union, which gives him in intense but restricted form a truly social experience. Nor can the Church hope to win recruits by denying to doctors, lawyers and teachers the strong fellowship of their several vocations. The Church of to-day signs with generous good will the Magna Charta of all these new liberties of the human spirit. She finds, in a restricted sense, something of her own nature and mission in these intense companionships of modern toil. She cannot now recall or revoke the right which has been granted to all sorts and conditions of men to live freely and adventurously along the lines of their individual gifts.

We must recognize the fact, however, that the problem for the Holy Church Universal is being vastly complicated by the present dissociation of society into human units and restricted groups. Her own interior sects may be a nominal denial of her claim to catholicity. But the real nub of the problem is to be found, not in the multiplied denominations, but in the increasing schisms between all our modern vocations. Given an Episcopalian lawyer and a Congregational chemist, the two are far nearer one another religiously as Episcopalian and Congregationalist than as lawyer and chemist, since for both of these men the major realities of life center about the noun of them rather than the adjective. The task of the modern Church is not a mere reconciliation of the denominational differences between these men. It is a spiritual interpretation of their two vocations, each to the other. The deeper problem of Church Unity is more than a matter of sectarian compromise and coöperation, it is one of total social translation. Conceivably the Church Unity program might be brought to some provisional conclusion by the merging of the denominations, but the resultant comprehensive body would be no more a true Church Universal than the scattered sects of the present, simply because the religious problem in its broadest and deepest aspects to-day is not a healing of sectarian schisms but a restoring of the interrupted and broken lines of human communication between the major groups of the industrial, professional and political world, and between all adventurous and pioneering freemen now cut off from the strong and sustaining companionship of men of kindred spirit.

The modern Church sometimes attempts to unite these persons on the ground of a common avocation, lying quite outside their major and imperious vocations. She enlists them in "church work" under her own distinctive aegis. But "church work" in any considerable volume is a luxury and a labor of supererogation denied to the busiest and most effective men and women of our day. Their vocation fills the eight, ten, twelve hours of the working day. It takes its toll of the best of a man's strength and ardor. There remain for "church work" only those meager margins of time and interest which do not represent the real man.

Mark Rutherford says that men ought not to despise those devices to which nature resorts to save us from ourselves, those

liberating avocations which are our spiritual exercise outside the prison shop and prison cell of our particular task. Butterfly catching, stamp collecting, violin practice, the study of poetry, all these save a man from himself and have inherent spiritual worth. A representative American has recently said that the longer he lives the more he is driven to the conclusion that the only important hours in his life are the hours outside the day's work, for it is then only that he has time to devote himself to the things that really matter in this world.

The religious pathos and perplexity of modern life arises from the fact that for many men their specialization has lost its initial religious meaning and become a manual or mental drudgery, and that they are driven to seek religion in their avocations. There is no least prospect that for generations to come men are to be released from specialized labor of hand and brain. The multiplication of industrial and professional species is apparently an inevitable social fact. Liberty of inquiry and effort leads in that direction. But it is as true of the spiritual life of man as of his political life that every liberator becomes in turn a tyrant. And the problem which the Christian Church faces to-day, as it dreams of its mission and possibilities, is the keen problem occasioned by the mental tyranny of the intensively specialized vocations of the modern world.

Something may be done to heal the situation, temporarily, by offering to the men of our time the common avocations of ordinary church work. In particular those maturer natures who have come to the point when they wish to see life steadily and see it whole, as well as to see it intently, may be reunited to their fellow seekers after God, in some small measure, through the normal interests and activities of the average parish. There is a certain type of business and professional man who has come to the point where he wishes deliberately to give more time to the "work of the Church," because he wishes to restore the balance of life. But the younger generation, staking out its holdings in the world of to-morrow, has no time for these avocations. And the hope of the Church rests with those who are still preoccupied with their vocations, to the neglect of conventional ecclesiastical avocations.

If the Church is to hold the rising generation and make appreciable advance toward the experience of religious catholicity she

must harden her heart against the limited avocations she can offer men, and must devote herself, first to sustaining the initial religious enthusiasms of every form of freedom and then to the interpretation of all forms of modern freedom, the one to the other.

Canon Barnett in East London came to doubt whether any such thing as distinctive "religious education" is now possible, whether religion can be dissociated as a separate entity from the multiplied interests of modern life. At least he reached the point where he saw the futility of enlisting semi-religious persons to teach so-called religious subjects. He preferred to have religious men and women teach any and all subjects, believing that essential and vital religion could be more effectively mediated in this way. Religious education in Toynbee Hall meant, therefore, classes in Botany, Chemistry, Clay Modeling, Geology, Shorthand, Singing, Wood Carving and a hundred other subjects.

The modern Church would do well to study that splendid effort to lighten the heavy and weary weight of life in Whitechapel. Toynbee Hall was not severely ecclesiastical nor conventionally religious, but it came far nearer realizing, under Canon Barnett, something of the nature of the Holy Church Universal than the average modern parish. The secret of its influence and success lay in its entire readiness to grant the inherent religiousness of any specialized human interest, at the same time that it interpreted the Clay Modeler to the Wood Carver through the medium of the common spirit. That Clay Modeling and Wood Carving were avocations for the costers of the East End was an incident in the history of Toynbee Hall. Barnett knew where his method led, and what his experiments implied, and he looked ultimately to the whole restatement of the Christian life in terms of the major vocations of our time inspired and reunited by a genuinely catholic Christian spirit.

Tyrrell, also, came finally to doubt whether the Christian religion as such can ever be extricated intact from its setting in history. He starts with the initial and inevitable historical judgment that Jesus never intended to found a new and distinct religion, but sought rather the spiritualizing of the life which he met at hand. "Christianity was, therefore, not a religion, but a spirit, mode or quality of religion, which might be found in various religions, but never apart by itself, as it were a 'subsistent quality.'

. . . To speak of a 'pure unadulterated Christianity' is really nonsense." Dean Inge is thinking in the same direction, "Saint Paul understood what most Christians never realize, namely, that the Gospel of Christ is not *a* religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest aspects."

Certainly the epochs of creative effort and of substantial advance in Christian history have been those when men interpreted religion in this intensive yet catholic spirit. Such a religion is intensive because it sets about the business of releasing the latent religiousness of each particular department of life. It is catholic because it seeks to inspire all vocations and interests by a common spirit. Christianity, thus interpreted, becomes not an added entity outside the major tasks of daily life, a mere common ecclesiastical avocation for the margins of men's energy, but the sum of all particulars of unselfish and sacrificial service in the day's work, and an experience of the actual community of sustaining spirit. This is the real work of the Church in the world of to-day, and nothing less than this will gain the interest and hold the loyalty of men and women, who for worse if not for better, are irrevocably committed to one or another of the imperious vocations of modern life. The Church stands in the world of to-day, not to offer men trivial and relatively unreal avocations, for the exercise of the religious spirit, but to recover and to incarnate the lost experience of human catholicity. If we do not win our initial experience of union with God by way of the felt solidarity of human interest and purpose, then religion remains a negligible addendum to our busy days, but not its heartening genius. And the Holy Church Universal will still linger long after "Church Unity" has arrived, because the raucous Babel voices of the specialists will still drown out the common theological vernacular of the reconciled sects.

Upon the continued presence of the religious freeman in the world to-day the modern Church may safely count. No one who knows our time well questions the fact that there are in all walks of life countless busy men and women, with little time for church avocations, who are really doing Christ's work in history. Wherever teachers are mediating the truth, wherever lawyers are striving to vindicate the eternal justice, wherever doctors and nurses are healing, wherever honest men are producing and exchanging

the necessities of life, there the work of God's Kingdom is going on. Many such are consciously trying to do their task in a Christian spirit and for Christian ends. They are very busy folk. Our age drives men at high pressure. Men and women in our cities are tired. Less and less will the wise modern church seek to draw these persons away from their effective vocations to the less effective avocations which she can offer them. Her task is to help them bear the load they have assumed, to bear it with a fine resilience, and keep replenished and refreshed the reservoirs of spiritual enthusiasm which makes all honorable tasks a part of the toil of God in history.

But there is one thing that all these folk need and they need it more and more keenly as the years go on, a sense of the common quality of spirit which goes into their varied labor. They are in constant peril of becoming religiously provincial and at times of becoming religiously discouraged because they do not sense the host of kindred prophetic spirits all around them in the modern world.

Where are these specialists to meet on any common ground? They are reticent as to affirmations of the religious idealism of their own task. They do not sense the spiritual quality in their brothers' vocations. These unecclesiastical Christians show forth the gospel with their lives far more naturally and effectively than with their lips. But somehow between this reticence and this lack of sympathetic insight the very real and profound catholicity of modern Christianity falls to the ground and is forgotten. The lawyer will not sense the truly religious spirit of the artist's studio. The doctor will fail to understand the religious motif which goes to the teaching of English literature. The business man will miss the profoundly religious spirit which keeps the nurses at their task. The housewife will not catch the religious idealism which sustains the public librarian. Each of us, when he steps outside the boundaries of his own vocation, is a stranger on the alien soils of the other major callings. Because we fear to make public fools of ourselves we keep our silence when we go intellectually visiting. But all the time there is something craving to be said, some tacit bond of felt sympathy crying for candid recognition.

It is with these forms of mature spiritual freedom in the modern world as it is with brothers grown to manhood. The hunger for

some recognition of the commonalty of their heritage and experience deepens with the years. What we took for granted in childhood and youth we somehow crave to express in our maturity. Yet this thing can never be said in the vernacular of our separate callings. We found homes of our own and go our ways in the world. My home must always be a strange place to my brother and at the best he can be only a guest with me. So my brother's home can never be a truly common meeting ground and I must be content to play the guest in turn when I go to him. That is why we wish the father's home kept always open, that we may go there again and again, to share without restraint the common blood ties of our manhood and to renew the purposes and enthusiasms of our youth. It is under that roof tree where our manhood was conceived and nurtured that we meet without restraint, no matter how old we have grown or how widely we have scattered, to know and feel the bond that makes us one.

In something of the same way the Church of to-day stands in the modern world as the Father's house, where the mature forms of Christian liberty may still know their commonalty of Christian heritage and inspiration. Whatever else a discerning modern Church tries to do for men, she will seek to be a place where the Christian doctor, the Christian teacher, the Christian lawyer, the Christian workman, the Christian employer, may meet under the Father's roof tree and around the Father's table.

There is no other institution which can keep open spiritual house for all sorts and conditions of men. The common tradition still rests in the Church no matter how independent our major vocations may have become intellectually and morally. And the only institution which still stands for the religious interest alone, no matter how ineffectually, is the Church.

The minister of to-day who visualizes the relation of his pulpit to his world will see that pulpit not as a Saint Simeon's pillar from which he may exhort the lesser breeds without the law. He will see it as the crossroads of the world's vocations, the clearing house of the common interests of all forms of free Christian service in our time. And he will see his church not as a city of refuge, not as a citadel of orthodoxy, not as a foil to all other institutions, but as the home of God in history, where God still meets his sons

in that deep and friendly companionship which arises when children grown to full and free manhood turn home again.

Whatever else she may be, the modern Church should be above all things the place where any and every man who is trying to do God's work through Christ's spirit may meet and know all sorts and conditions of men who are trying to do the same work in the same way. The Church ought to be the place where the truly religious man will be prompted to know and to say,

> Men and I be blood brethren
> I will drink of no ditch, of no deep knowledge,
> But from the Common Cups—all Christian souls.

The Church stands in our bewildering world with its intensive specialization driving each one of us off onto the tangent of his own particular vocation, to say quite simply and directly to us all, "One is your father and all ye are brethren."

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